Suggestions for creating a Welcoming Environment for New Faculty
November 3, 2016

Our model of inclusive excellence is predicated on the notion that we welcome all members of and to our community. However, small actions can send different and unintended messages. The following is a list of suggestions a chairperson can do to help establish a welcoming department for new and indeed all faculty members. They are not intended to be extensive nor prescriptive for department chairs. Rather, they serve as guidance and perhaps as discussion topics at departmental meetings. These suggestions can be shared with current faculty members in a preliminary meeting and things the department can do collectively or individually during the year.

THINGS TO DO TO PREPARE THE DEPARTMENT
1. Put the topic of "welcoming environment" on the department agenda prior to new hires starting in the department.
2. Assign a department faculty member as mentor for the new hire—preferably one that is within the same discipline.
3. Let all faculty know that new faculty will not receive the courses no one want to teach. There will be fairness in the scheduling process.
4. Inform faculty to explain acronyms until all are familiar with their meaning, and the "inside jokes" should be avoided.
5. Assign current faculty to areas that will support the new hire and inform new hires. For example, research, best practices in teaching, community service, and Institute service.
6. Put yourself in the place of the new hire in the department. Ask the last two department hires to meet with you to develop a list of welcoming strategies in the following areas:
    a. Department meetings
    b. Day-to-day interactions
    c. Social opportunities
    d. Other inclusive activities

THINGS TO DO AS CHAIRPERSON
1. Make yourself available to all faculty members.
2. In the first year, set up a regular monthly meeting with new faculty to review progress relative to a plan of work and expectations. In subsequent years, adjust the frequency as needed.
3. Consider facilitating a discussion at a department meeting about the norms (e.g., how the group expects individuals to interact) of the department.
4. If the department hosts social occasions, make sure that all are invited.
5. Make sure that if there are groups of faculty that go to lunch on a regular basis that they think to invite the new faculty (keep inviting even if they initially turn down the request).

6. Make classroom visits and provide feedback. Simply asking the old "more seasoned" faculty to do that may create an adversarial relationship.
7. Meetings that impact the department should be made for all to participate—avoid meetings before the meeting or in places where all do not have access (e.g., men's room)
8. Remember emails are not as personal a face-to-face chat.
9. Use transparency when making course selection and scheduling.
10. In yearly performance assessments, exhibit fairness and a willingness to help the faculty member to improve especially when the assessment received is "meets expectations." Give concrete examples of how to improve.
11. Explain how grade disputes are handled.
12. Provide supportive feedback to all faculty on a regular basis.
13. If in your judgment there are areas of concern, don't send emails and leave it at that. Talk to them first and see what is going on. Then send an email summarizing the action plan.

THINGS TO DO AS A DEPARTMENT
1. Invite the new members to lunch, coffee, drinks, or other non-work activities.
2. Based on the comfort level of invitee and new hire, show an interest in the faculty member's personal and professional goals. Interest can range from a research agenda, best practices in teaching the discipline, promotion, to living in Rochester.
3. New faculty members do not necessarily know the inside jokes, the acronyms, or the other unique characteristics of the department. Someone new can feel as if they belong more to a department when someone explains these to them.