

Elmhurst College

New Faculty Mentoring Program 2002-2003 Academic Year

PROGRAM

This is the fourth year of a developing program sponsored by the Faculty Council and funded by the Academic Affairs Office. Earl Swallow (earls@elmhurst.edu or ext. 3577 or Campus Mail Box #3) serves as program coordinator. The program began in Fall 1999 with two wine-and-cheese gatherings so that interested mentors (tenured faculty members) and new faculty members could meet. This year, those who joined the faculty during Fall 2000 and 2001 are being included in program activities along with new faculty who have come since then. After individual mentoring relationships are arranged, the participants determine what occurs. Participants' reactions will be solicited to assess the program. A web page with materials and links of potential use to new faculty is available at <http://www.elmhurst.edu/~earls/newfac> .

BACKGROUND

During Spring 1999, a small faculty and administration group [Dianne Chambers, Richard Roughton (then Dean of Continuing Education), and Earl Swallow] was asked by Michael Bell to design a proposal for a new faculty mentoring program. They surveyed untenured full-time faculty as well as those tenured over the previous three years and received 11 responses from untenured faculty and 4 from recently tenured faculty. Some patterns emerged from the responses. In particular, a number of respondents thought that mentors from **outside** one's department had been or could be highly useful. Respondents overwhelmingly indicated that any mentoring program should be **informal and voluntary** and that it should enable new faculty members to choose their own mentors. On the basis of these survey responses and further discussion, the group agreed on a set of characteristics that should define any such program.

DESIRED MENTORING PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

1. The program should be voluntary on both sides. Some new faculty may simply not need or wish to participate in a mentoring program. Every effort must be made to assure them that participation is *not required*. (There should be no hidden agendas.)
2. The program should allow new faculty members to select the mentor.
3. The program should provide support to new faculty members while also encouraging feedback (in terms of teaching, service, scholarship, *etc.*) from the mentor.
4. The mentor and new faculty member should meet and agree on the sort of things that will happen in the mentoring relationship (meeting for coffee or lunch, visiting classes, mentor maintaining contact, mentor providing information on college policies and culture, *etc.*) but the relationship should remain informal and flexible.
5. The program should encourage a relationship between peers and should avoid creating yet another set of expectations for new faculty members to meet.
6. The program should set up one-on-one mentoring relationships.
7. The program should not "come out of" the Academic Affairs office. New faculty members need to know that the program is an option, and is in no way a requirement.
8. Most important, such a program should not take the place of existing highly effective mentoring by department Chairpersons or other department members. This mentoring program (which would offer the chance for cross-departmental mentoring) should function in addition to rather than instead of departmental mentoring.