Mentoring, and More Mentoring

This fall the LTC and the Dean of the College office will be launching an expanded new faculty mentoring program. The desire to revise our current mentoring program for incoming faculty arises from a realization that we are not doing as much as we could—or, in some cases, as much as our peer institutions are doing—to help launch the careers of our newest colleagues.

The new program will build on some of the strengths of what we have been doing for many years—providing an intensive two-day new faculty orientation program in the fall, offering a teaching workshop for new faculty during the December break, and pairing each incoming faculty member with a senior faculty mentor in another department.

Beginning in the fall, though, the scope and schedule of the program will be revised and extended.

♦ Many of the sessions that have been packed into the December workshop will be redesigned into monthly sessions spread out over the first two years and into the fall of the third year. This will enable new faculty members to cover more ground in a way that will be better coordinated with the trajectory of their careers.

♦ The second year “curriculum” will shift the focus from teaching to scholarship and building collegial networks beyond Carleton, and then to preparing for the third-year review.

♦ The individual faculty mentoring relationship will continue for two years, which we believe will deepen these important connections with senior colleagues.

♦ All new faculty will be invited to visit one or two class sessions of a more seasoned faculty member in another department.

♦ Incoming faculty will also be allotted a certain number of sessions with our team of student observers.

♦ There will be more opportunities for social events among new faculty, both with and without their mentors.

Individuals who joined the faculty in the fall of 2011 will be invited to move right into the second year of this mentoring program, which will involve one meeting each term.

Designed by Associate Dean Nathan Grawe and LTC Director Louis Newman, the new faculty mentoring program has benefitted from input from the FAC, FPC, JFAC, a focus group of new faculty, and department and program chairs. We are grateful for everyone’s input and the many expressions of enthusiastic support we have received about this new program.

AALAC Comes to Carleton in June

The LTC is hosting a workshop on “Mentoring a New Generation of Faculty: Challenges, Prospects, Best Practices” to be held on June 3-5. The workshop is sponsored by the Alliance for the Advancement of Liberal Arts Colleges (formerly known as the “Mellon 23”), which includes most of the country’s top-tier liberal arts institutions.
AALAC Comes to Carleton—continued

More than thirty participants representing nearly all of the 23 member colleges will attend sessions that will showcase a wide variety of faculty mentoring programs.

The keynote speaker for the workshop will be Mary Deane Sorcinelli, Associate Provost for Faculty Development at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and a nationally recognized leader in this field. Her talk is entitled “Mutual Mentoring: Moving Beyond One-Size-Fits-All Mentoring.”

Louis Newman and Sam Keller, an LTC student fellow (class of ’12), will share reflections on Carleton’s distinctive student observer program in one of the other sessions of the workshop.

We’re pleased to be the recipients of this AALAC grant and anticipate a very lively and fruitful couple of days of collegial conversation.

Did You Know ...

♦ that the LTC will turn 20 this fall! We’ve come a very long way since receiving the initial planning grant from the Bush Foundation in 1991. In recognition of two decades of “creating collegial conversation” look for some special speakers and programs this coming year. We look forward to celebrating our successes and contributions to the culture of teaching and learning at Carleton.

♦ that LTC lunch events are videotaped and uploaded to our website. So if you missed a session that you had really been hoping to attend, you get a second chance. Maybe not quite as good as being there in person—and you have to provide your own lunch—but they’re sure to be informative, nonetheless. Just be patient; it sometimes takes a number of weeks to get these videos uploaded. (We’re hoping to catch up over the summer.)

♦ that there is a shelf of “freebie” books for the taking in the LTC lounge. Many of these are leftovers from prior years’ LTC book groups. And you don’t even have to attend the discussions now to get the book. While you’re treating yourself to a free book or two, check out the LTC’s ever-growing collection of books and periodicals. Instructions for checking out items from the LTC collection—which are searchable on the Bridge—are provided on the coffee table.

The LTC Review — Over, but not Finished

Thanks to everyone who participated in the LTC’s first formal review process, which was conducted this spring. Many faculty and staff met with Richard Gale and Peter Felten, our external reviewers, during their two-day visit to campus. Special thanks to SERC (Science Education Resource Center) for conducting focus groups on campus in the winter, and to Charlene Hamblin, administrative assistant to the LTC, for all her work in coordinating this review process.

A summary of the recommendations that emerge from the reviewers’ report will be printed in the fall issue of The Learning Community. Then the work of implementation begins, and with it the opportunity to make the LTC even more effective in fulfilling its mission.