

New Faculty Seminar Task Force Recommendations

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Purpose/Function: In anticipation of a record number of faculty hires by the college for 2016-2017 and a number of other initiatives including, but not limited to, work in student equity and a realignment of professional development offerings, this task force was created by the Academic Senate during the summer of 2016. The task force was charged specifically with evaluating then-current structure of the New Faculty Seminar (“NFS”) and making both short- and long-term recommendations, as needed, to provide an enriching and continuous professional development opportunity for immediate as well as future hires. The task force then requested, and was approved by the Senate, to continue its work into the fall semester as the revised NFS was being implemented to assess the changes and make additional suggestions.

Specifically, the task force’s objectives included:

- **Evaluating the Need for a More Traditional Curriculum-Based Approach:** This included consideration of the need for a formal course outline with course measurable objectives and outcomes for NFS with the goal of creating a turnkey model for future facilitators, balancing that with a productive, relaxed educational atmosphere; recommending improvements for assessing and measuring success via POD and/or other evaluations; considering the use and propriety of alternative delivery modalities – hybrid, online, self-directed, and/or peer-led learning groups; considering the applicability of project or activity-based learning to the curriculum; evaluating the efficacy of current content/topics; and making recommendations on a variety of other fronts.
- **Making Recommendations re: the Optimal Cohort Size for NFS:** This objective included making immediate, practical recommendations to address cohort classes of all sizes, particularly the incoming class of nearly 55 new faculty members for the coming fall.
- **Fostering Inclusivity Across Campus:** This objective included making scheduling recommendations that are inclusive of counselors, coaches and others, e.g., evaluating flexible v. locked scheduling; considering the length of the seminar, e.g., 1-year, 2-year, series of smaller workshops?

Method of consultation:

The group met beginning in late June in person and continued meeting into July, with additional work and input sought from members via e-mail. Initial recommendations were made based upon those meetings and continued work of the task force.

Surveys were also conducted of the college’s full-time faculty and deans as to topics covered by the NFS prior to the start of the semester as well as feedback collected from the participants of NFS at the conclusion of the fall program. Additionally, during the

fall, NFS participants were informally and formally surveyed to gauge the effectiveness of various formats, recommendations and other needs of the NFS participants. The task force's recommendations are based upon these sources.

Background

The previous model of the NFS required students to begin the year with workshops beginning the day prior to the college's annual Flex Day. From there, the group would meet bimonthly throughout the year on Friday afternoons from 12 p.m. (noon) until 3 p.m. Students attended up to 48 hours of workshop trainings focused on three major areas (or pillars):

1. Pedagogical Development. Topics included:

- Syllabus Guidelines
- Student Learning Outcomes
- Locus of Control
- Non-native speaker in the classroom
- Exemplar Teachers
- Professional Ethics
- Listening Skills
- Assessment Strategies
- Controlling the Classroom
- Philosophy of Teaching
- Group work in the Classroom

2. Acclimation to Mt. SAC. Topics included:

- Introduction to the NFS
- Pictures and ID Cards
- IT, Portal, and Banner
- Distance Learning at Mt. SAC
- Moodle
- Admissions and Records, Add/Drop, Grade procedure
- Schools First
- College Outline of Record for Courses
- The College Structure
- The Faculty Association and CCA
- The Academic Senate
- Student Life and Discipline
- Campus Safety
- Health Services
- The Counseling Department
- Wellness Center
- Suicidal Students

- LGBTQ
- Teacher Prep Institute
- The Honors Program
- Adult Education
- Bridge Program
- Mt. SAC Library
- History of Mt. SAC
- Planetarium, Wildlife Sanctuary, Farm
- Tutorial Services

3. The Tenure Process and Portfolio Development. Topics included:

- The Tenure Process
- 1st Year Experience
- 2nd Year Experience
- The Tenure Committee
- The Faculty Contract
- Portfolio Review

With some 55 full-time mid-year and August hires, concerns were raised as to the size of the workshops, with creating more flexibility in timing of the offerings, and including deeper pedagogical concepts in the program than what had previously been provided. Out of these concerns, the task force's recommendations grew to address the topics and needs both as identified above and as they arose during the fall offering of NFS. The following suggestions represent the final recommendations of the task force:

Recommendations:

1. Cohort Size:

- a. The Task Force initially recommended that the 2016-2017 cohort be split into two groups of approximately 20-23 participants each. This was accepted by the Senate and AMAC. This was done to help ensure productive participation among an interdisciplinary cross-section of new faculty members. This also ensured that each cohort's size would be manageable and provide ample opportunity for new faculty to share ideas and express their opinions. This flexibility also provided faculty members who had occasional schedule conflicts the option of attending the other cohort session rather than miss the content offered that day.
- b. Going forward, the Task Force strongly recommends that each cohort or section limit its enrollment to 20 faculty participants each.
- c. The Task Force further recommends that one coordinator be utilized if 20 or fewer faculty members participate in an NFS cohort for any given year. If there are more than 20 faculty participants, then the task force would recommend assigning two coordinators to NFS for that year, doubling the reassigned time for the coordinators to account for the increased duties.

Co-coordinators were utilized for the Fall and will again be utilized for Spring 2017.

- d. Ideally, the NFS coordinator(s) would be someone who is also on the Faculty Professional Development Council (FPDC). In the case of two coordinators, only one would need to be on FPDC. Not only does this have the benefit of folding the work of FPDC into the seminar but allows for reporting back to FPDC on a systematic basis of any needs, issues or adjustments needed to the NFS so that they can be addressed in a timely fashion. For instance, this year, a concern arose during a workshop on portfolios about the expense of creating portfolios. That resulted in a request to Instruction, Human Resources and the Faculty Association to provide funds to reimburse faculty members some of the costs.
- e. The task force also recommends that the coordinator(s) be expected to develop a written curriculum, similar to a course outline of record for each content area or institute, described below. This responsibility would include developing learning outcomes for each content area, as well as developing a faculty handbook for participants, memorializing lesson plans, developing and maintaining copies of handouts and other resources, developing and updating an NFS website containing electronic resources for the group, help with locating and scheduling speakers, etc. [Outlines and minutes of each workshop were produced as part of the Fall 2016 offerings to lay the foundation for this curriculum.]

2. **Scheduling:**

- a. In addition to the previous Friday afternoon workshops, the NFS should provide an earlier, morning section at a minimum to accommodate the large, incoming group of faculty members so that the group can be split into two cohorts. This should permit a second cohort to be taught, as the number of hires demands it, by the same facilitator/coordinator, helping to standardize the content being taught while increasing efficiencies in preparing and delivering course content.
- b. Attendance by NFS participants should be tracked at each seminar and noted within each faculty's POD record to permit for partial attendance and accurate record-keeping. Although this has been done in the past, there is some confusion as to whether some entering classes were tracked as such.
- c. In addition, the additional seminar provides greater flexibility to some participants, such as counselors and coaches, who have missed or arrived late on occasion due to scheduling conflicts. In researching this issue, it appears that this is more anecdotal than real. Of recent counselors and coaches, only a handful were not able to attend on select occasions. For counselors, the problem appears to be a conflict with two Student Services' meetings offered during the fall and spring. In both cases, counselors reported arriving late but not necessarily having to miss NFS. To remedy this, the task force suggests that the NFS coordinator(s) reach out to the Vice President of Student Services to inquire as to those dates and to schedule around those as best as is practical. For coaches, the

earlier Friday cohort should assist in avoiding late Friday and weekend conflicts often associated with competitions.

3. Marketing to Incoming Faculty

- a. The task force would like to improve the marketing of the NFS to onboarding faculty members by promoting the NFS as a valuable opportunity early during the hiring process and beyond. Suggestions include:
 - i. Requesting that Human Resources begin communicating with new hires after an offer has been accepted that the NFS will be meeting on select Fridays during the fall and spring semesters so that faculty members may plan in advance to avoid conflicts to the extent possible;
 - ii. Having POD assist in marking the seminar to managers to improve participation in the NFS;
 - iii. Requesting presentations at Cabinet, at an Instruction meeting and a Student Services management session to update those constituents about upcoming NFS cohorts, dates, and to encourage their help with promoting the seminar to managers within the divisions and departments and newly hired faculty; and
 - iv. Distributing a letter co-authored by the Vice President of Instruction and the faculty member's respective Division Dean promoting the NFS, attaching a promotional flyer and a link to an electronic resource site that would include materials important to new faculty members, among other ways.
- b. A New Faculty Handbook should also be written and published electronically. An electronic link would be pushed out to the divisions so that they could distribute to incoming faculty, even including to adjunct faculty members, for the year. The handbook would cover basic information such as where to obtain keys, how to make copies, what information is required for syllabi, where to obtain parking passes, how to operate classroom technology as well as other basic information needed on the first day of classes.

4. Content-Based Recommendations

- a. The task force recommends adding a fourth content area to the curriculum, to include significant work in improving student equity. This is driven, in part, by the college's new equity initiative and will incorporate the work currently planned by POD to deliver similar content to all faculty.
- b. The current format of the NFS should be divided and split into content-specific institutes or focuses, where each particular content area forms the basis for content-specific professional development. For example, rather than have the NFS comprise 48 hours of training devoted to multiple areas, the workshop would be split into four distinct modules, each focusing on a particular content area, e.g., pedagogy, equity, the tenure process and acclimation to the college. This structure would align itself with forthcoming changes expected in POD that will provide faculty the opportunity to earn certificates in topic-specific institutes. Like those

changes, NFS participants could track completion of each module or institute by attendance at the presentations on those topics. If a faculty member, for some reason, could not complete a module or institute on a given topic, they could be allowed to later repeat or take that module the following year or through some other alternative, perhaps replacing that module with a more advanced module through POD. While the total hours expected of NFS participants would remain the same, e.g., 48 annually, the modules would each form some prorated share of those hours. In this way, modules could be enlarged or condensed as needed to accommodate changes needed in any particular area of content.

- c. The facilitator/coordinator should also develop written objectives for presentations that can be shared with guest speakers and presenters as they are scheduled so that talks can be tailored to achieve the given objectives.
- d. The facilitator/coordinator should request presenters provide advance copies of all materials, handouts and presentations along with electronic versions of the files to the facilitator/coordinator for posting to a web page containing resource links for NFS participants. [Currently, a Canvas site is being maintained with access to NFS materials.]
- e. To ensure the confidentiality of sensitive conversations among participants, each should be given a confidentiality statement noting that statements made during an NFS workshop or outside among participants are confidential. This is particularly important to the ability of participants to have open and honest communications about department and division expectations, the portfolio process, and probationary evaluations.
- f. Formal program assessments should be conducted every November and May. These instruments should be submitted a month beforehand to FPDC for its review and approval and the data, and an executive summary will be presented to FPDC at its last meeting each semester for review and feedback. (FPDC reports up to PDC and across to Academic Senate about the results.)
- g. Written curriculum with learning outcomes will be created and submitted in institute form to the Faculty Professional Learning Team (PLT) by November 1, 2017 and FPDC by the end of the Fall 2017 semester utilizing input from the task force and survey data from current participants. We would suggest adopting the learning method which limits "lecture" content to 10 minutes and requires activities, discussions, projects, case studies, and other approaches to engage faculty while also providing them access to information about programs and services.
- h. A capstone assignment should be utilized to assess learning outcomes of the program in each spring semester.
- i. NFS should be included in Professional & Organizational Development (POD) program review.

5. Ongoing Support of the NFS Program

- a. The Task Force would suggest that a second-year seminar be developed as well as an adjunct orientation program.

- b. The Task Force recommends that the Faculty Association formally engage with the NFS team to discuss the first-year probationary process, available materials for faculty, and how to best prepare faculty to succeed without undue stress. These negotiations should address the possibility of ongoing financial support from the college for first-year faculty to reimburse them for certain expenses spent on their portfolios.
- c. The Task Force recommends a budget for NFS to be provided by the college (\$500/person for the year - minimum \$5,000). These funds would be utilized to cover field trips off-campus, reading materials, outside speakers, hospitality, supplies, etc.