

1. Applicant information

Carol A. Miles, Director
Learning Technologies and Teaching Support
Educational Development Centre
410 Dunton Tower
Carleton University
1125 Colonel By Drive
Ottawa, ON K1S 5B6
Tel: 613-520-4027
Email: Carol.Miles@carleton.ca

Martha Anne Roberts
Postdoctoral Fellow in University Teaching
Development
Educational Development Centre
410 Dunton Tower
Carleton University
1125 Colonel By Drive
Ottawa, ON K1S 5B6
Tel: 613-520-2600, ext. 8901
Email: Martha.Roberts@carleton.ca

2. Overview

Descriptive Title

A National Needs Analysis and Recommendations for Targeted Programming for Mid-Career Faculty

Scholarship

There is a tremendous focus in the higher education teaching and learning literature on new faculty support and training of future faculty (see for example, Austin, 2002; Boice, 1992; Ellis & Schönwetter, 2001; Rice, 1996; Taylor & Schönwetter, 2001). A tremendous amount is known about what new faculty need, what sorts of mentorship and other support programs work to fill that need, and the kinds of teaching training that new and future faculty (TAs) need. In contrast, very little is known about mid-career faculty (Baldwin & Chang, 2006) with the exception of a few small scale studies into the supports and services for research needed by new faculty (e.g., Nottis, 2005). Recently Baldwin and Chang (2006) attempted to find out the extent to which institutions across the United States support mid-career faculty in all aspects of their careers. They found that programming tended to address general resource awareness issues, career-planning, development, and renewal, mentoring and networking, research, awards and recognition, and teaching support. Of the latter focus, only three institutions had teaching support programs that specifically target mid-career faculty and these programs took the form of teaching project development grants (i.e., teaching release). The authors went on to describe a coordinated and comprehensive program model for mid-career faculty development that was based on a handful of programs already in place in the US. The model focuses on the whole career and highlights the need for collegial support, resources, and reinforcement in the form of awards, grants, and recognition.

It is critical to note that Baldwin and Chang's (2006) model focuses largely on the research and service aspect of an academic career, with only a brief mention of teaching. Further, this model does not mention the types of support and services mid-career faculty need in order to breathe new life into their teaching careers. Thus, there is a critical gap in the literature. No Canadian analysis of mid-career faculty exists and no focused analysis of the needs of mid-career faculty in teaching and learning support exists in North America. The proposed study would constitute the first rigorous investigation into this important gap in the literature.

Intended Outcomes

The proposed project will involve a large-scale needs analysis in the Fall of 2007 of mid-career faculty (defined as post-probationary to 5-years pre-retirement) from at least five institutions representing each region of Canada. The needs analysis will involve: a) a census survey of mid-career faculty at each participating institution using an easily accessed online survey tool; b) a series of focus groups consisting of mid-career faculty from each institution; c) an online discussion forum for faculty developers to discuss their specific interactions with mid-career faculty; and d) a

neutral observation of programming and allocation of resources at each participating institution. Results of each phase of the needs analysis will be organized and distributed to the teaching and learning centre contact from each participating institution. Contacts from each centre will then meet through a “webinar” in winter 2008 to discuss the needs analysis and discuss programming options to meet these needs. Specific recommendations to address identified needs will be compiled into a list of suggested programming. Participating institutions will then be in a position to pilot different programs and track the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of each program throughout the 2008/09 academic year. By summer 2009, the lead investigators at Carleton will critically analyze the results of pilot programs and make recommendations to the greater community of educational developers at large.

Rationale

Educational developers spend a great deal of time, energy, and resources in support of new faculty (mentorship, orientation, certification, workshops, training) and future faculty (i.e., graduate student TAs). Often “champions” of teaching and learning at various institutions are new or nearly retired faculty. As described above, a recent US study showed an alarming lack of teaching development support for mid career faculty. This is an alarming gap in programming and support for what is arguably the most important client group that educational developers serve.

Without question, mid-career faculty shape the general mood and approach to teaching and learning at every institution. They teach the most courses and largest numbers of students, spend the most time in the classroom, and are the bulk of the active researchers who are mentoring future scholars. With the latest NSSE driven mandates to improve the quality of education that our undergraduate students receive (often coming from upper level administrative structures such as the Ontario Council of Academic VPs) it is not a stretch to argue that this is a critical group to target for full scale teaching and learning support programming. One could even argue that improving our support and services to this client-group should indeed be signaled out as an item in and of itself in the EDC 5-year plan. The best way for us to bridge this gap is through careful, empirical needs analysis. Once we have a better understanding of their needs we will be better poised to offer the support and services in such a way as to meet their needs.

Dissemination

Rigorous dissemination of results is planned from bulletins and newsletters to each interested party, STLHE conference proceedings, POD conference proceedings, Ottawa-Carleton Teaching and Learning Forum proceedings, publication in peer-reviewed scholarly journals, popular media publications (newspapers, radio, Maclean’s Magazine, University Affairs, etc.)

References Cited

- Austin, A.E. (2002). Preparing the next generation of faculty. *Journal of Higher Education*, 73, 94-122.
- Baldwin, R.G. & Chang, D.A. (2006). Reinforcing our “keystone” faculty: Strategies to support faculty in the middle years of academic life. *Liberal Education*, 92, 28-35.
- Boice, R. (1992). *The new faculty member: Supporting and fostering professional development*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Ellis, D. and Schönwetter, D. J. (October 2001). Help through the gateway: Assessing teaching certificate programs. Paper presented at the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education, St. Louis, MI, USA. 48.
- Nottis, K.E. (2005). Supporting the mid-career researcher. *Journal of Faculty Development*, 20, 95-98.
- Taylor, K. L. and Schönwetter, D. J. (June 2001). Seeing the future: Using a faculty needs assessment for strategic planning for faculty development programs. Paper presented at the

Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada.

Rice, R. E. (1996). *Making a place for the new American scholar*. Washington, DC: Association for Higher Education.

3. Budget

| Item | Cost |
|--|-----------------|
| Salaries | |
| Undergraduate student research assistant (data entry) \$20/hr x 50 hrs | 1,000.00 |
| Benefits 9.4% | 94.00 |
| Materials, resources, supplies | |
| Food for focus group participants at each of 5 institutions at \$100 per institution | 500.00 |
| Lottery for survey participation for each of 5 institutions at \$100 per institution | 500.00 |
| Other | |
| Webinar Hosting. Elluminate (a local company often contracted by our centre for such occasions). | 400.00 |
| Requested Amount | 2,494.00 |

Note—This budget is specifically for the funds requested from the EDC Grant. Carleton University's Educational Development Centre that will offer in-kind support through staff and internal office budgets to ensure successful completion of this important work.