

**Faculty Mentor Program Guidebook**

*Investing in Faculty*

*Please contact* [*TrainingAndDevelopment@Collin.edu*](mailto:TrainingAndDevelopment@Collin.edu) *with questions/suggestions.*

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*The objective of the Faculty Mentor Program is to assist new faculty as they transition to Collin College during their first year. The program is designed to be mutually beneficial to both the mentor and mentee, as both can learn from each other.*

# Guiding Principles

1. The relationship between the mentor and mentee is a professional relationship based on trust and a commitment to making the experience valuable for other parties.
2. Mentors should denote their interest in serving to their associate deans/directors.
3. Mentors must be accessible and willing to communicate meaningful feedback regularly with their mentees during the academic year.
4. Mentees must be accessible and willing to communicate meaningful feedback regularly with their mentors during the academic year.
5. Mentors and/or mentees should contact their associate dean/director if there are any problems or significant changes that occur during the mentoring process.
6. Mentors should follow the recommended timeline provided herein during the academic year.
7. Mentors should guide faculty toward success in assimilating the college’s culture and operating within the college’s core values.

# Collin College Core Values

We have a passion for

* Learning
* Service and Involvement
* Creativity and Innovation
* Academic Excellence
* Dignity and Respect
* Integrity

# Adjunct and Full-Time Mentees

This guidebook is designed to help a mentor work with either an adjunct faculty member or a full-time faculty member. Acknowledging that some expectations differ between these groups, please work with the mentee to understand the different expectations.

# Role of Supervisor

Because a mentor is not a supervisor, the mentor must remain in regular contact with the mentee’s supervisor to assist with the onboarding process. The mentor should be mindful of contradicting the supervisor’s instruction. Should any significant concerns arise, the mentor should notify the supervisor immediately.

# Mentor Checklist and Timeline – First Semester

*During the first semester of the mentor’s work with the mentee, the mentor will focus on helping the mentee acclimate to their new faculty role at the college. Mentors will help mentees with understanding general expectations for their role, preparing for any potential challenges, and with becoming familiar with necessary logistics.*

**First Meeting -** The primary goals of the mentor’s first conversation with the mentee are to begin getting acquainted with one another and building rapport, begin thinking about some potential goals for the fall semester, and set up another time to connect with one another before the semester begins. Below are potential points for discussion and suggestions for how mentors might use the time with the mentee during the first meeting.

* Make introductions and share names, backgrounds, teaching experience, interests, etc.
* Review goals of the mentor program and guiding principles.
* Share positives about working at Collin and ask the mentee what brought them to join the faculty here, what they are looking forward to, what they are hopeful for, etc.
* Discuss with the mentee things they might be feeling anxious about regarding the start of the semester (and, of course, help alleviate that anxiety!).
* Help provide responses to or useful resources regarding any initial questions the mentee might have prior to the start of the semester.
* Begin brainstorming some potential goals with the mentee for the semester, which can continue to develop. Similarly, the mentor could simply sketch out some action items for the coming weeks/semester. For full-time faculty, remind them of the upcoming 90-day evaluation.
* Direct mentees to the [Training and Development website](https://inside.collin.edu/tl/profdev.html).
* Discuss any upcoming trainings and meetings that are required or would be helpful (e.g., department meetings, advisory meetings, professional development, etc.).
* Provide contact information for the [Help Desk](https://www.collin.edu/aboutus/helpdesk.html).
* Provide information for [Human Resources](https://www.collin.edu/hr/).
* Provide the [Essential Information for Employees](https://inside.collin.edu/hr/newemployeeresources/Essential%20Information%20for%20Collin%20College%20Employees%20v.12.21.2023.pdf) contact information.
* If the mentee is a full-time team member, ensure that they have the New Faculty Academy dates and information.
* Establish a general sense of how the mentor and mentee would like to work together during the year. For instance, when do are planned meetings? How often?
* Share contact information and schedule a time/place/format for the next meeting.

**Prior to the start of the semester -**

* Review goals of the mentor program and guiding principles.
* Remind of Collin’s Core Values.
* Discuss potential challenges the mentee may encounter.
* Exchange teaching and office hour schedules (if mentee is a full-time instructor).
* Direct mentee to the [Faculty Starting Line](https://collin.instructure.com/enroll/E3RLKL) onboarding training course in Canvas and answer any questions as needed.
* Assist mentee with logging into CougarWeb, navigating the homepage, and with accessing Canvas, [eLC resources](https://inside.collin.edu/elc/), OneDrive, accessing the H:Drive and I:Drive, etc.
* Direct mentee to obtaining their college ID.
* Assist mentee with using campus phones.
* Discuss any [tutoring services](https://www.collin.edu/studentresources/tutoring/index.html) that should be highlighted to students.
* Review emergency procedures, explain how to register with [CougarAlert](https://www.collin.edu/cougaralert.html), and encourage saving the Collin College Police number (972.578.5555) and Help Desk in the mentee’s cell phone.
* Remind the mentee to get a Collin parking decal.
* Confirm the mentee knows the correct steps to take to take when absent, regarding notification, substitutes, Workday entries, etc.
* Ensure the mentee has the necessary textbooks and supplies.
* Tour the campus with the mentee, noting the location of places like the library, the Dean of Students Office, Academic Advising, eLC, HR, copiers/Scantron machines, mailboxes, division supply room, campus after-hours contact information, etc.
* Review lab space specific to the department/program to ensure the mentee follows safety practices and workflow procedures.
* Guide the mentee in the use of classroom audio-visual equipment and whom to contact if they have technological issues.
* Review the 90-Day Checklist for New Faculty (available on the CTL [New Faculty Resources Guidebook page](http://inside.collin.edu/tl/new_faculty_resources.html) and in the Faculty Stating Line on Canvas).
* Remind the mentee to complete the Education and Teaching Experience sections of the [CV in Concourse](https://erie.collin.edu/cas-web/login?service=https%3A%2F%2Fapi.apidapter.com%2Fv0%2Fcollin%2Fcas_to_concourse) (Account -> Profile) if this is the first semester teaching at Collin. Additional guidance [here](https://inside.collin.edu/curriculum/vpaa.html).
* Review the mentee’s syllabus/syllabi. Check for these items:
  + Clear and accurate grading policies
  + Descriptive classroom management policies regarding attendance/late work, disruptive behavior, plagiarism/cheating, etc.
  + Thorough class calendar with due dates for major assignments, withdrawal deadline, and date for final exam.
* Provide dual credit information such as the [Dual Credit Faculty Guidelines](https://www.collin.edu/express/dualcredit/index.html), contact list of special admissions coordinators, information related to specific ISD(s), etc., if applicable.
* Provide information from [COAT on the core assessment purpose and process](https://inside.collin.edu/tl/COAT.html), the assessment rubric(s), and any example assignment(s), if applicable.
* Provide information from the [Institutional Research Office](https://inside.collin.edu/institutionaleffect/) regarding program review and Continuous Improvement Plans (CIPs), if applicable.

**Within the first week of the semester -**

* Discuss classroom management techniques and explain how and when to utilize [SOBI](https://collin.guardianconduct.com/student-portal/new-report) and the [Student Incident Report](https://collin.guardianconduct.com/student-portal/new-report).
* Discuss progress, questions, and obstacles, etc.
* Review the purpose of accurate roster certification and assist in the roster certification process. Students not receiving Financial Aid are not dropped from the certified roster.
* Review the purpose and protocol of the [ACCESS Office](https://www.collin.edu/studentresources/disabilityservices/index.html) and the student and professor roles in implementing accommodations.
* Review the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)](https://collin.oudeve.com/register/ferpa.html) and [FERPA Authorizations](https://vssb.collin.edu/PROD/cc_s_ssb_itemized_ferpa.Verify_Student_Response) (inside CougarWeb).
* Discuss the rationale behind generally returning assignments with feedback and/or grades within 2 weeks of submission.
* Ensure the mentee understands what to do if the mentee is absent from class (e.g., notifying department, Workday requests, assignments in lieu of attendance, etc.).

**Within the first month of the semester -**

* Ensure mentee knows how to access the [Faculty Handbook](https://inside.collin.edu/tl/pdfs/Faculty_Handbook.pdf) and the [Student Handbook](https://www.collin.edu/studentresources/deanofstudents/documents/2023-2024%20Student%20Handbook.pdf).
* Talk with the faculty member about [Council on Excellence’s definition of an excellent faculty member](https://inside.collin.edu/committees/coe/EXCELLENT%20Faculty%20Member.pdf).
* Review opportunities for [college service](https://inside.collin.edu/committees/coe/multi_year_contracts.html) (top right) and professional growth that might be of interest to mentee.
* Share information about [campus student organizations](https://www.collin.edu/_showcase/student_orgs.html).
* If the mentor is a full-time faculty member, please share ideas for tracking information for the annual appraisal and Multi-Year Contract processes.
* Invite the mentee to informally observe a class and schedule a follow-up discussion.
* Ask if the mentee would like to observe a class and provide a debrief time.
* Schedule an informal visit to the mentee’s class by midterm. See Conducting an Informal Classroom Observation, Pre-Observation Discussion Form for Peer-to-Peer Class Observation, and Peer-to-Peer Evaluation Form for Classroom Visit below for more resources.
  + Review the Class Observation Report form and/or the [Online Class Observation Form](https://inside.collin.edu/elc/online_class_visit.html). Please explain what to expect.
    - Ask mentee to complete the Pre-Observations Conference Form (below).
    - Request any pertinent materials such as syllabus, lesson plan, handouts, etc.

**By midterm -**

* Informally observe a class session taught by the mentee and schedule a time for a post-observation discussion. See Conducting an Informal Classroom Observation, Pre-Observation Discussion Form for Peer-to-Peer Class Observation, and Peer-to-Peer Evaluation Form for Classroom Visit below for more resources.
* Review the student evaluation process and evaluation instrument. See Student Evaluation Instrument link below.
* If the mentee is a full-time faculty member, please discuss assigned ceremony, ordering regalia, attendance expectations and protocol, etc.
* Review programmatic assessment requirements to include resources and the timeline necessary for success. This should encompass the program assessment plan, and any CIPs that interface with the course(s) the mentee is teaching (or will teach).

**Within the final three weeks of the semester -**

* Discuss the [final exam schedule](https://www.collin.edu/academics/final_exam_schedule.html) and the expectations governing final exams, particularly at dual credit sites, if applicable.
* Discuss the guidelines for submitting a grade of incomplete (I).
* Discuss the requirement to provide a date of last attendance for any student assigned a final course grade of F.
* Review instructions for changing a final course grade.
* Discuss end-of-semester procedures, including submitting final grades, saving gradebooks, etc. Note additional steps if teaching dual credit students.
* Ensure the mentee knows how to review student evaluations and consider possible changes. See Student Evaluation Instrument link below.
* Discuss the mentee’s reflections on the semester and set goals for the next semester.

# Mentor Checklist and Timeline – Second Semester

*The mentor’s work with the mentee during the second semester will focus on maintaining the relationship, serving as an ongoing point of contact and support, helping the mentee prepare for any end-of-year appraisal process, and planning for next year.*

**In the week prior to the start of class -**

* Offer to meet with mentee to help prepare for the semester by reviewing the syllabus for a new course prep, discussing curricular changes, increasing classroom engagement, etc.

**Around midterm -**

* Check in with the mentee to answer questions and/or address obstacles.
* Determine if the mentee wants to observe a class again.
* Determine if another informal class observation would be helpful and make any necessary arrangements.

**Within the final three weeks of the semester -**

* If the mentee is a full-time team member, ensure that they have information necessary for the annual appraisal process. See Full-time Faculty Annual Appraisal Instrument link or Adjunct Faculty Annual Appraisal Instrument link below.
* Remind the mentee how to review student evaluations and consider possible changes. Part-time faculty will complete the Student Evaluation Reflection and full-time faculty will respond in the self-evaluation of the annual appraisal. See Student Evaluation Instrument below.
* Set an end-of-semester meeting to reflect and set goals for the next semester and/or academic year.

**At the end of the semester -**

* Review the mentee’s goal progress and/or attainment.
* Remind the mentee to reach out to you and/or the associate dean/director with future training needs.

# Program Recap

*We appreciate your contributions to the continuing development of all faculty to better serve our students. Should you have any questions about this program, please contact TrainingAndDevelopment@Collin.edu.*

# Conducting an Informal Classroom Observation

*The mentor’s classroom visit with the mentee should be informal and relaxed; let it serve as a kind of “practice” session in preparation for when their associate dean or director observes later. What follows here are just a few core principles and best practices for engaging in a classroom observation to ensure that the process is comfortable while still being a beneficial experience for both parties.*

**Be honest yet constructive.**

First, and perhaps most obviously, honesty is critical when it comes to giving feedback of any kind, whether to students or to the mentee. Being falsely affirming will certainly not be useful, particularly if the goal is to help them improve and prepare for the observation with their associate dean/director. (In fact, studies have found that some instructors can become frustrated if their supervisors are not critical enough because they want to know how to improve. Of course, this might differ from one faculty member to another, and the mentor is not a supervisor.).

An important part of being honest, of course, is also being constructive. Offer the kind of feedback that is going to be helpful, not vague, or hurtful – in other words, the kind of feedback we wish students would give on student evaluations.

**Respect the vulnerability of teaching and being observed.**

It is vital that the mentor really appreciates and respects the vulnerability of teaching and the act of being observed. To invite someone into a classroom for ANY reason and open oneself up to feedback is a brave act. Obviously, this exercise is part of the territory of being a faculty member, and it’s all for the greater good.

Nevertheless, it’s worthwhile to be cognizant of and honor the anxiety that can come with being observed by a colleague. Anyone who has ever been in the classroom might understand this! Indeed, the literature confirms that the act of being observed increases levels of anxiety, stress, and self-doubt, all of which can eat away at the confidence of the instructor and their effectiveness in the classroom in the moment. So, when stepping into the mentee’s classroom, keep this in mind and strive to be encouraging, empathetic, and supportive.

**Less is more.**

It is important to be selective in the elements of teaching that the mentor might choose to discuss with the mentee. While the mentor may have 15 concerns about the classroom observation, from the instructor’s use of verbal fillers like “um” to the kinds of questions asked, the mentee can realistically only process a few ideas at one time. If the mentor overwhelms the mentee with observations and suggestions, chances are that the mentee will begin to shut down and those great suggestions will go unheard. Strive to focus on just a few important elements of their teaching – ideally no more than 3, or at most, 4 of the most important, most doable suggestions for improvement.

**Prioritize.**

As the mentor decides what to focus on in any feedback, the mentor will necessarily need to prioritize suggestions and emphasize the big-picture, more important issues. First, what is most vital to the mentee’s success in the classroom? And second, what is most accessible and realistic for the mentee to achieve? For instance, it might be more worth the mentor’s time to discuss an instructor’s problematic relationship with students instead of the overuse of “um” or pacing at the front of the classroom. Likewise, if the mentor is working with a mentee who struggles to engage students and only feels comfortable with lecturing, it might be more reasonable to suggest a simple, low-risk “think-pair-share” activity than a high-stakes strategy that requires a lot of preparation and the willingness to give more control to students.

**Appreciate differences.**

This can be one of the more difficult pieces of observation because instructors know what works well individually. However, it is imperative that mentors avoid projecting their own teaching style onto others and remember that there is more than one “right” way to teach. Try to gauge the mentee’s personality and let that drive the conversation and expectations. Appreciate their individuality and the different qualities that each instructor brings to the classroom, and work to make suggestions that will highlight their unique strengths.

**Offer options, not mandates, and consider language.**

If the mentor chooses to provide feedback to the mentee about their teaching after the observation, the mentor should also strive to be thoughtful in language and consider the most effective way to offer ideas and problem solve with the mentee. Again, there is no single “correct” way to do something in the classroom, though there might be more effective ways, and the mentor’s language should reflect that. Rather than making demands, make suggestions and give options to the mentee. For instance, instead of writing or saying, “You are doing this wrong,” the mentor might say, “This didn’t seem to be as effective as it could be. What if you tried this?”

The use of qualifiers such as “perhaps,” “what if,” “you might,” “consider,” “I encourage you to,” etc. can be particularly beneficial in softening language to this effect. This does not mean that the mentor cannot be direct (for certainly that is often necessary in reaching some instructors.). However, the conversation will likely be more successful and enjoyable with kindness and sensitivity.

Similarly, the mentor should consider referring to their own experiences in the classroom (good and bad!) to help provide context. This can help the mentee realize that the mentor has been there too, building rapport and affirming their own experiences.

**Don’t forget the positive.**

While it’s important to be honest and constructive, it is also crucial to remember to point out the positive in the teaching observed. Strive for a balance between positive praise and constructive feedback. Again, this will make any feedback easier to process for the mentee and mitigate any potential feelings of anxiety or frustration. (Perhaps the mentor knows what it is like to only get negative reviews – it can make one feel like giving up!) Let this experience be an opportunity for the mentor to build the mentee’s confidence while also having a rich and productive conversation about great teaching!

# Pre-Observation Discussion Form for Peer-to-Peer Class Observation

*The use of this form is optional and to be used at the discretion of the faculty member.*

*Prior to the scheduled class observation, complete the following form to structure the discussion of the teaching context of the class that will be observed. Information can focus on class goals, students, learning activities, and teaching style. If requested, be prepared to supply a copy of the syllabus, text, and any pertinent material that will help the mentor understand the content and cognitive level of the course.*

**Instructor: Date of observation:**

**Course title: Class day(s) and time(s):**

**Class location: Number of students:**

1. **What are the goals/objectives for the class?**
2. **What instructional strategies will you employ?**
3. **Describe the teaching and learning activities that will take place (or supply a lesson plan for the class session).**
4. **Will you employ a new or “untested” activity or teaching strategy in this class? If so, briefly describe it.**
5. **What have students been asked to do in preparation for this class?**
6. **Note any element that you want the observer to focus on during the visit.**

# Peer-to-Peer Evaluation Form for Classroom Visit

**Faculty name: Class/section: Date of visit:**

**Evaluator:** Evaluate the instructor based on the criteria listed below by describing the observations of the mentee’s classroom presentation/activities conducted during the visit. This form is designed for the mentor informally to provide constructive criticism, support, and encouragement to the mentee.

**Criterion 1: Preparation & Structure**

* 1. Instructor provided an overview of the topic(s) of discussion/objectives for the class.
  2. Instructor connects prior learning with new concepts in a logical manner.
  3. Instructor held class according to the scheduled time; materials/resources were cued and ready when needed.

**Strengths:**

**Opportunities for growth:**

**Criterion 2: Content**

* 1. Class content is presented in a logical and purposeful manner.
  2. Instructor delivers content/leads students through skills practice effectively.
  3. Class content was appropriate for achieving instructional goals.

**Strengths:**

**Opportunities for growth:**

**Criterion 3: Learning Environment**

* 1. Instructor provides opportunities either/or designs activities that promote student engagement.
  2. When appropriate, activities allow for real-world applications of the discipline such as, but not limited to, experiential learning, case studies, and/or problem-based activities.
  3. Instructor maintains a welcoming environment.
  4. Instructor encourages participation of all students, checks for understanding during class, solicits questions, or provides clear answers to students’ questions.
  5. Instructor communicates effectively and professionally.

**Strengths:**

**Opportunities for growth:**

**Evaluator’s overall comments/recommendations:**

# On-Site Class Observation [Link](https://inside.collin.edu/committees/coe/On-Site_Classroom%20Observation_Form_2022.pdf)

# Student Evaluation Instrument [Link](https://inside.collin.edu/iro/sei_reports/sei_survey/Student-Evaluation-of-Instruction-All-Online-V2-1.pdf)

# Full-time Faculty Annual Appraisal Instrument [Link](https://inside.collin.edu/committees/coe/Faculty%20Annual%20Review%20template%2001.13.23.pdf)

# Adjunct Faculty Annual Appraisal Instrument [Link](https://collin.pathify.com/pages/appraisals)