

**Consortium for Faculty Diversity
at Liberal Arts Colleges**



Fellowship Program

GUIDELINES ON MENTORING

The Consortium for Faculty Diversity at Liberal Arts Colleges (CFD) Program

The Consortium for Faculty Diversity at Liberal Arts Colleges (CFD) Program was established in 1987 with two purposes: to increase the diversity of the student applicant pool at liberal arts colleges and to increase the diversity of the applicant pool for faculty positions. In 1996 the part of the program directed toward student admissions was dropped and the program became focused solely on helping to increase the diversity of the applicant pools for pre-doctoral and post-doctoral fellowship opportunities at liberal arts colleges.

Currently, the immediate aim of the CFD Program is to assist and support diverse scholars in the early stages of their careers. The further aim of the program is to increase the pool of diverse scholars who will have firsthand experience teaching at liberal arts colleges and, in addition to being strong teacher/scholars wherever they go, may, indeed, choose to consider positions at member institutions of the consortium or at similar institutions as these positions become available. Ideally, the liberal arts environment should emerge as a diverse laboratory for dynamic and productive experiments in teaching. On the broadest scale, we look to serve academia as a whole by helping to support and train the next generation of teacher/scholars.

The CFD Fellowship Program provides a supported transition for Fellows moving from graduate school to teaching in a liberal arts environment by (1) enabling pre-doctoral Fellows to complete their dissertations in a timely fashion; (2) enabling post-doctoral Fellows to submit work for timely peer review, e.g., in publications; and (3) providing guidance, feedback, and opportunities for reflection, conversation and community in teaching.

Mentoring and professional development are key elements in achieving both goals. These Guidelines for Mentoring are the first of their sort for this program and are a result of past participant evaluation and an ongoing investigation as to how the program is administered and experienced across institutions. The Guidelines assume that its users are familiar with and committed to the tenets of CFD and the many reasons why faculty diversity is important to American higher education and liberal arts colleges, in particular. The colleges involved in this consortium believe that education is most effective in a learning community that includes different perspectives and different points of view – we learn most when our assumptions and points of view are challenged by alternatives, causing us to think deeply and critically about principles, assumptions, what information is relevant, and how to reason to a conclusion. Indeed, this commitment is at the heart of this program.

Everyone benefits when the program is successful. Students benefit from the opportunity to take new courses, and from a learning environment with a more diverse range of instructors and scholarship. Expanded departmental offerings should create opportunities for existing faculty members to teach new courses and/or co-teach with a CFD Fellow in an area of mutual or overlapping interest. The presence of the Fellows on campus and within a specific department stimulates the intellectual community in general and specific ways, and presents an array of possible research and creative collaborations.

Guidelines for Mentorship Relationships in the CFD Fellowship Program

Introduction

A successful CFD Fellowship year is likely to be as varied as are the CFD Fellows and their institutional hosts. A successful CFD Fellow-Mentor relationship is likely as varied as are CFD Fellows and Mentors. According to feedback from past participants, however, all successful fellowship appointments and mentoring relationships share common features:

- Deans/Provosts of the hosting institution act as first and last point of contact for the Fellow, and properly prepare Mentors, Host Departments, Fellows and the campus community-at-large for the high priority the program is accorded within the institution. The Deans/Provosts coordinate other activities and support, including office and computer assignments, research resources, general orientation and faculty development workshops, job preparation workshops, among others.
- CFD Fellows are encouraged from the beginning of the process to take an active role in constructing and pursuing research and teaching, and their professional and personal goals over the course of the fellowship year(s); and
- Mentors provide active and explicit partnership and guidance about opportunities and feedback to help the Fellows attain their goals.

These guidelines seek to identify the structural elements at play in creating this lively and supportive experience and provide recommendations of best practices for all who are involved in the process.

Overview of Responsibilities

- Clear expectations: The Office of the Provost/Dean is responsible for informing all participating parties, including the Department, Mentor, Fellow, faculty orientation and faculty development coordinators, and campus as a whole, about the opportunities inherent in the CFD Program: namely, how it reflects and engages the values and commitments of the institution, and about the expectations that the College and the Consortium have for the Mentor about support and mentorship for each Fellow.
- Welcome: Departments should be fully aware of, in contact with, and welcoming of the Fellow; apprised of the Fellow's Mentor; clear about what courses are being taught by the Fellow; and satisfied that logistics of office and computer assignment are met.
- Active Engagement: Mentors should contact Fellows early – ideally before they arrive on campus, and then regularly – at a rate of their own mutual, combined determination. The relationship between the Fellow and Mentor is integral to the success of the CFD program, establishing a rhythm and agenda that responds to the Fellow's particular academic pedagogical, professional, and personal goals, needs, interests, and position, especially as it relates to completion of the dissertation and/or subsequent research/creative work.
- Follow-through: In addition to extending to the Fellows the range of support offered to other new faculty members (welcoming and orientation programs, lunches, logistical support, etc), the dean/provost should take special care to ensure that the Fellow

receives this support and the additional mentored attention that is specific to the program.

- Institutional transparency: If there is a prospect for a CFD Fellowship position to be converted into a term or a tenure-track position, expectations should be clear and explicit so Fellows (now candidates) and Mentors can appropriately adjust to the circumstances. Since most CFD Fellows will eventually be job candidates, whether internal or not, support and priority for preparation for job searches should be given
- Conflict resolution: An explicit protocol for resolving disputes and misunderstandings should be made available to all parties by the Office of the Provost/Dean to address breakdowns within the process and/or between the Fellow/Mentor.

Mapping the Mentorship: Best Practices

Selection and Recruiting CFD Fellows

The first phase of establishing a relationship with the CFD Fellow is in the selection and recruiting process. That process needs to fit well into the campus culture and process for recruiting faculty members, and establish a strong sense of commitment and involvement on the part of the potential host department or program that the Fellow will join. In December, the campus will receive copies of the applications of all applicants for a CFD Fellowship along with information on the disciplinary interests of the Fellows (as provided by the applicants). The specific process of selection and then recruiting must be specific to the practices of the campus, but some common practices are as follows. In all cases, regardless of variation of procedure during the selection process, the campus and department or program should develop a plan for mentoring the Fellow, should an offer be made and accepted.

- Many campuses provide access to all of the relevant applications to each department and program and invite the departments and programs to make proposals to host particular fellows.
- At some campuses invitations to candidates for interviews are conditioned on preliminary indications by the host department or program about the “connections” that are envisioned with the interests of the candidate and specific nominations of potential mentors for the teaching and scholarly or creative work of the candidate.
- At some campuses certain departments or programs are pre-selected as having high priority for a fellowship appointment and then the relevant applications are shared with those departments or programs.
- The campus process may involve competition between departments for permission to recruit a fellow, or the priorities for where fellows may be appointed could be determined in advance.
- Typically the department or program will contact potential fellows with authorization from the dean/provost and discuss their interest in the potential position prior to arranging an interview.

Usually an on-campus interview occurs before an offer is made. While the on-campus interview would have many similarities to that for a regular faculty position, it is also appropriate to be sensitive to the phase of career of the candidate (just starting the dissertation, well along with dissertation, already postdoctoral, etc.) For instance an informal discussion of the scope of the scholarly project might make more sense than a formal presentation of a finished product for a

candidate early in her or his scholarly career. In the interview the candidate might meet with current or past fellows, others with similar scholarly interests, etc. In the interview it is important for the campus to make clear whether or not the fellowship is simply a one-year fellowship, whether there is a prospect of renewal of the fellowship, and whether a full-time term or tenure track position might evolve from the fellowship. Managing expectations of the institution, department and the fellow are critically important to developing and maintaining a good relationship. Assessing the fit to the campus expectations for teaching, scholarship and other duties is critically important for a successful appointment.

If an offer is made, it should be consistent with the expectations of the CFD program (salary, teaching and scholarly expectations, etc.) Just as in regular faculty offers, there will be substantial variation from campus to campus, so being as specific as possible about salary and benefits, support for scholarly work and development, teaching duties, involvement in non-teaching duties, etc., is important.

After the Fellowship has been awarded: The CFD Mentor

The Dean/Provost is responsible for ensuring the selection and appointment of one or more mentors securing for each CFD Fellow. A Mentor is a faculty colleague that is willing, interested and appropriate for the Fellow's prospective teaching and ongoing scholarly and creative work. Effort should be made to match compatible, if not similar, areas of specialization. This Mentor should be appropriately recognized according to the rules for each institution.

Ideally, the Mentor:

- has had some role in the Fellow's interview/hiring process;
- facilitates opportunities for collegial relationships and professional development on campus and within the wider academic community

In some cases, institutions have met the needs of the Fellow by arranging multiple mentors -- sometimes delineated as a research mentor, a teaching mentor, and a "community" mentor. While the benefits of such a model are many, and such diversification of support may be necessary and even encouraged, the Dean/Provost and Host Department must ensure that adequate support and recognition is afforded to each assigned Mentor. Surveys indicate that often when there are several mentors, one is privileged in terms of support or recognition, to the detriment of the relationships provided by the others.

Before the Fellow Arrives: Groundwork

Surveys indicate that successful Fellow-Mentor relationships correlate to the establishment of early communication before the Fellow arrives and subsequent follow-up when the Fellow joins the campus community. To this end, we recommend that the Mentor e-mail the Fellow as soon as their relationship has been secured in order to provide initial contact and suggestions for first steps.

Logistics

Mentors, should be in touch with the Host Department and Dean/Provost, to help ensure that:

- arrangements are made for a suitably equipped office in the Fellow's host department or other relevant location, including computer equipment and other office supplies, as well as appropriate keys, login access, etc.)
- information about local housing options are sent to the Fellow, along with the basic campus and community orientation materials

Teaching

During an initial series of e-mails, phone calls, and/or meetings, the Teaching and Research expectations, commitments and goals – those of the Fellow and the institution – should be discussed and established in writing to the extent that all parties are satisfied with the map. It is recommended that the document include expectations about such things as: course load; course preparation; on campus requirements and availability for campus involvement; travel and/or other support for professional development (including the completion of the dissertation and job applications) and research.

- Course Load: The Fellow's course load is appropriate and fitting. Course assignment should in general serve the needs of both the Fellow and the institution, with priority given to the needs of the Fellow. For example, a Mentor might suggest that rather than having the Fellow teach an introductory course, the Fellow might better serve the students, the department, and themselves by teaching a seminar-like class related to the dissertation. On the other hand, given the needs of all parties, the same argument can be made for teaching core and/or introductory courses. It is recommended that opportunities to team-teach with existing faculty members also be explored. The Mentor should also ensure that no additional teaching is assigned, nor invited, beyond the terms initially proposed (typically one course for pre-doctoral Fellows and two courses for post-doctoral Fellows).
- Course Preparation: Fellows should receive guidance while preparing the course syllabus. For Fellows teaching in their first semester, initial course preparation will be done before arriving at campus -- the Fellow should be trusted to design her/his own course, but advice is appropriate about local norms for the amount and level of difficulty of readings; requirements for passing a course (weight of various projects, class attendance); standards for grading and expectations for substantial comments and perhaps reading a re-write; and norms for office hours. Email contact should be regular between department members and the Mentor and Fellow, especially in the case that a Fellow is teaching a departmental core course.
- Attention to mutual benefit: the creative structures that might support a Fellow also benefit the Mentor. For example, co-teaching with a Fellow might reduce a mentor's teaching load, allow the mentor to experiment with new course material while also simultaneously providing an ideal situation to observe the Fellow's teaching, to discuss different pedagogical approaches, to address problems and strengths as they come up. Ideally, supporting a Fellow only enhances the intellectual life of the Mentor.
- Peer observation of teaching is often an effective way to gain perspective on pedagogical choices and the effectiveness of pedagogical methods. Mentors should encourage Fellows to observe classes of faculty colleagues and should encourage the Fellows to invite colleagues to observe their teaching.

Research and Community Commitments

Expectations regarding the completion of a dissertation and/or subsequent scholarship/creative work should be stated clearly and definitively. Emphasis on *completed* work should be spelled out as the primary aim of the fellowship. With the support and guidance of their Mentor and host department, the Fellow will need to learn to balance time put into writing and scholarship alongside participation in campus life, including committees, meetings, informal advising, organization of special events, even study groups.

The Mentor (after consultation with the dean/provost) should ensure that expectations are clear – for the Fellow, the dean/provost and department members – regarding an on-campus presence. For example, how often must the Fellows come to the office on campus (daily, all day, weekly)? Are extended absences (a week or more at a time) permitted? What are the expectations for collegial activities (weekly department lunches; meetings of an interdisciplinary group; new faculty orientation; etc)? Is it acceptable if the Fellow stays home and writes off-campus, only coming in to teach and hold a few office hours? Each CFD Fellow might have a different relationship to the campus; a mutual agreement should be established from the start about what the expectations are for this relationship, at its basic level.

During the Fellowship Residency: Ongoing Engagement and Career Support

It is recommended that after the initial period of orientation, the Mentor and Fellow establish a structured and regular method of communication – revisiting and discussing initial goals and concerns established by the Fellow. Ongoing engagement and support ideally will center around these goals, as well as checking in about (1) the experience of the CFD Fellowship, (2) progress toward completion of scholarly projects, (3) pedagogical issues and teaching (including class observation), and (4) strategies for going on the job market.

Toward the ongoing support of the Fellow, the Mentor can engage in the following suggested aspects of career support:

- Facilitating contacts with relevant colleagues, within and outside the department. Introduce her/him and make sure others know of the presence of the Fellow. Arrange for the Fellow to give a campus or conference lecture early on, so others learn of research interests;
- Organizing peer review groups and reading and critiquing drafts of dissertation chapters, or conference paper (or finding others to do so);
- Organizing a symposium or lecture (perhaps involving the dissertation advisor);
- Participating in the selection (if appropriate) of new Fellows;
- Supervising senior theses;
- Dining weekly with students in ethnic centers on campus;
- Participating in job searches within the department or in departmental reviews;
- Mentoring existing students or meeting with prospective students of color.
- Encouraging and facilitating visits to departments or programs at peer institutions.

Toward the support of the Fellow's teaching experience, the Mentor can:

- Provide constructive feedback on lecturing, class presentation, and discussion leading skills. A Mentor might arrange to visit classes periodically *and* arrange for the Fellow to visit her/his own classes, or those of other established teachers. This will equip the Mentors and other members of the host institution to write useful letters of reference for the Fellows once they commence the job search process.
- Provide support for interpreting and discussing student course evaluations.
- Discuss openly problems most teachers encounter at one time or another: inappropriate student behavior towards each other or towards the faculty member (non-stop talking, racial- or gender-inflected statements).

Toward supporting a Fellow's whole person, a Mentor might offer relevant integrative advice or support, such as:

- Introducing Fellows to each other (in the case that more than one CFD Fellow is hosted at one time) and to other pre/postdocs on campus.
- Acknowledging that academics have personal lives – offering support or context for issues with partners, especially those in long-distance relationships; for dual-academic couples; issues around parenting; for those single without a significant other, etc.
- Discussing issues that might come up with extra-curricular relationships with students. Review your institution's policies on personal relationships between faculty members and students and underline the multiple dangers of developing "favorites" (or even being perceived as doing so).
- Being a person who represents the diversity in a community in which there is very little diversity– among students and/or faculty members – and in a community where there may or may not be familiar sources of affirmation (e.g., religious groups, social life, personal services, food sources, dining options, civic organizations, etc.). Being on a small campus at some distance from a city, maybe in an unfamiliar part of the country, can be disorienting to anyone.

Toward the support of a Fellow on the Job Market:

- Provide administrative perspective: it has been widely appreciated when Deans/Provosts resume an active role in this area, providing information about what the job search looks like from the administration's side.
- If the primary Mentor is not in a position to write an effective letter of reference, that can attest to scholarly and teaching effectiveness, be sure to arrange for someone who can.
- Share information as necessary: Where are job listings, how are applications screened and candidates notified, where and how are preliminary interviews conducted? How are campus visits handled: who interviews (provost/dean, department colleagues, students), who makes the decision? What should a candidate accomplish in a job talk or a sample class? What should a candidate ask in order to decide whether to accept an offer?
- Arrange for the Fellow to give a mock job talk and critique its effectiveness. Offer to read an application letter, C.V., and writing sample. Stage a mock interview.

- A Mentor should help any Fellow who ends up being an internal candidate for a subsequent job at the host institution. It is imperative that institutions be clear from the outset about prospects for the fellowship converting into a full-time term or tenure-track job, or for the Fellow being a candidate for a position – in either case, the Fellowship year should be carefully protected from becoming year-long job interview. Fellows report great confusion over the variation that exists among institutions: some have resources for moving successful Fellows into new, special-opportunity tenure lines, some assign Fellows to departments where they expect retirements (but then also do national searches), some know they will not be able to keep the individual beyond the term of the fellowship, some suggest the possibility of a tenure-track position, but it never materializes. Since Fellows are encourage to be in touch with each other, one should assume that institutional differences are know; this is all the more reason to be clear about the situation for each Fellow at the host institution.
- In addition to being up front about prospects for a given fellowship, it is also important that fellows who do become internal candidates for a job understand that they will be treated fairly, are told what will be expected of them, how they will be evaluated and what, if any, their role is in the search: meeting other candidates? hearing their talks? being expected to hide on the days when candidates are on campus?

After the Residency is completed:

At the end of each Fellowship year, the CFD administrative office sends an evaluation form to each Fellow. The information from these evaluation forms is compiled by the administrative office and the information is circulated in the next year as a part of the Annual report.

On each campus, it is essential that the Fellow have exit interviews with someone in the dean's/provost's office, someone in the host department, and with the Mentor(s). The exit interviews should focus on what worked well in the Fellow's year on campus, what did not work well, and what could be done to improve the experience of the Fellowship year. Sharing this information should be a prerequisite to developing better experiences for future Fellows.