

The information below is from Chapter 5, Faculty Retention: replacing Dysfunctional Practices with Good Practices, in the book Faculty Diversity: Removing the Barriers, by JoAnn Moody, PhD. First Published 2012, by Routledge, 711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017.

This contains some very useful information on how department chairs can help new faculty in their transition to UNC Charlotte. If you would like the entire book, please let ADVANCE FADO (advanceuncc@uncc.edu) know and they can get you a copy.

Chair's Duties Owed to Brand-New Faculty Hires: A Checklist

* Prepare members of the department for the new hire's arrival in several ways.

Prior to every new faculty member's arrival, the department as a whole should meet with the dean to decide specifically how the newcomer(s) will be welcomed, professionally supported, introduced to networks and key players, and so on. In addition, the department chair and dean should lead discussion on how diversifying the faculty will enhance (rather than dilute) the excellence of the department and its value to students and the campus. The new colleague (if an URW - under represented woman, or NI - ethnic minority) must not be undervalued and belittled as a "diversity" hire; it is the department chair's responsibility to be on guard and to preempt any such negativity. How to recognize and rise above unintended gender bias and group bias should be reviewed, together with ways to reduce complex dynamics for those in solo situations. These reminders are necessary for tremendously busy departmental members. Their attention to collegiality and equity should be revived in a tactful but effective manner, prior to the new hire's arrival.

* Assign short-term (one-semester) allies to new faculty hires.

The chair could ask appropriate senior faculty to make a point of offering specific help along these lines: "Do you know much about how the grant process works? I'd be glad to discuss this over lunch. I myself used to be overwhelmed by it." Or "I taught that course last year. Would you like to discuss it? I can dig up my old notes and exams. Feel free to ignore them if they don't help."

* Disarm those who may be opposed to the new hire.

"Very few faculty appointment decisions are unanimous," observes University of Washington Physics Professor Marjorie Olmstead. "Don't assume that the opposition will evaporate overnight." Take pro-active steps to turn around those likely to undermine the new hire or at least work to neutralize their power (conversation with Professor Olmstead, 2009).

* Supply a newcomer with essential information about departmental operations months before their arrival on campus.

The department chair, aided by other faculty and the departmental secretary, should provide details to the newcomer about course load, anticipated class size, academic level and preparation of students, and expectations regarding office hours. Details about other duties (as clinical-care provider or museum director, for instance) should obviously be spelled out. Sample course syllabi should be sent, together with sample book lists or case studies that the newcomer may wish to review, plus email addresses of faculty who have taught the course and are willing to chat with the newcomer. Access should be provided to campus teaching/learning platforms, such as Blackboard, and a schedule of system tutorials should be provided. Texts and case studies previously used in courses and phone numbers or emails for publisher's representatives should be sent to assist the newcomer in selecting course materials. Student advising responsibilities should be outlined, and faculty should be told how student affairs and academic advising staff can support them in their teaching and advising roles. Finally, newcomers should receive a copy of current

personnel handbooks. (Bensimon, Ward, and Sanders in their 2000 book provide abundant details and checklists for department chair wishing to be more effective as faculty developers.) One caveat: a chair should demystify various tasks but avoid micro-managing the newcomer.

* Assign courses carefully to early-stagers and newcomers.

For all new full-time hires, the department and its chair should do their best to arrange a reduced teaching load during the newcomers' first year and also ensure that the courses to be taught are ones that are very familiar. These steps will help newcomers avoid a frenetic launch of their careers (Sorcinelli at the UMass-Amherst website).

* Double-check to see if equipment and space are ready for the newcomer's arrival.

Several weeks prior to the new faculty member's arrival, find out if their office or clinical space, computer, lab and other equipment and staff are ready. Make sure that all promises made to the new hire during the earlier hiring process are kept. If any of the equipment or support promised fails to materialize or is being delayed, then the chair or a designated senior faculty member should immediately and apologetically inform the newcomer prior to his or her arrival. What should be avoided is a lapse or omission that might be construed by either an international or domestic colleague as a confusing or insulting slight which is cultural or personal in nature.

* Introduce and warmly promote the new faculty member to students (at the very beginning of the semester).

To heighten the newcomer's sense of belonging, the chair or a designated senior faculty member should visit each newcomer's classes on the first day of the semester, to briefly and enthusiastically explain to students why the department is so pleased about its new addition. This courtesy visit will also help students better appreciate the authority of each new faculty member, especially those whose intellectual abilities may be doubted by students unaccustomed to having an URW or NI instructor. In addition, the chair should underscore to the dean and faculty colleagues how valuable the newcomer is to the department. But my caveat is this: perform these courtesies for all newcomers; start a new department-friendly tradition for everyone. (I am pleased to learn that a senior history professor at Berkeley on the first day of a new lecture class introduces each of his teaching assistants to the students, generously underscores each assistant's qualifications and scholarly interests, and then admonishes students to "do everything these TAs tell you to do.")

* Acting as a broker

Immediately introduce the new faculty member to each departmental colleague and then, throughout the year, help newcomers make substantive scholarly connections within and outside the department. Merely making casual introductions is insufficient.

* Protect junior faculty---in particular NIs and URM (under represented minority) ---from excessive teaching, advising, and service assignments.

This is the responsibility of provosts, deans, and chairs. A chronic overtaxing predictably occurs when URW and NI faculty are asked to serve as the "diversity" member for numerous campus-wide or department communities. Prevent an overload not only of committee work but also of student advising. Help early-stage colleagues wisely choose committee assignments and leadership positions that will enhance their standing among their colleagues and boost their career advancement.

* Ensure that professional-development workshops are being offered every year.

[These should be] for early-stage faculty (including adjunct, term, tenure-track, research-only, clinical, and so on). These workshops were discussed earlier in this chapter.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bensimon, E., K. Ward, and K. Sanders. *The Department Chair's Role in Developing New Faculty into Teachers and Scholars*. Bolton, MA: Anker, 2000.