

Case Studies in Mentoring Community College Faculty

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Description

The session will focus on creating a program for faculty development in response to changing expectations to faculty work. Roane State Community College has eight campuses, and serves 6,500 students in a rural area. The tenure and promotion process at Roane State allows all tenured faculty members in the division to vote. Traditionally, faculty have relied on personal knowledge of tenure candidates in making their decisions. Recent growth in enrollment at Roane State's branch campuses led to faculty being stationed almost exclusively at one location, having little interaction with faculty on other campuses. Consequently, the system of evaluation through personal knowledge was no longer feasible. Likewise, with a growing number of faculty geographically scattered, a system of mentoring by all was no longer effective.

Session participants will be presented with descriptions of the problems and will propose solutions. The facilitators will then present the approach implemented by faculty at Roane State.

Mentoring the faculty

The first case study will consider our efforts in providing guidance to tenure probationary faculty. Being a community college, RSCC considers teaching the primary criterion for tenure. We will show how we refined the focus of a classroom observation, from a cursory review of single class periods to in-depth assessment of instruction, faculty-student interaction, and course design. As a second piece to the mentoring process, we will show how annual promotion and tenure workshops were used to direct faculty in their efforts to document evidence for all promotion and tenure criteria.

Mentoring the mentors

At Roane State a tenured faculty member is assigned to guide the tenure-probationary faculty through the probationary period. In the second case study, we will describe how a mentoring program was developed to clarify mentor responsibilities and to achieve departmental consistency in the mentoring process. An essential component of the tenure-track faculty evaluation procedure is the tenure portfolio. Our program describes the objectives for faculty mentors, including specific suggestions of evidence that mentors can encourage the faculty member to use as supportive evidence of the tenure portfolio.

We will conclude the session with a question and answer period.