

# **MENTORING ALLIANCE PROGRAM**

## **MENTORING SESSIONS TOPIC GRAB BAG**

### **FOR CONVENERS AND TENURE-TRACK FACULTY**

**AUTHORED BY**

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## Introduction

After conducting independent research on the relationships between formal and informal multidimensional mentoring networks during the 2020-21 AY, Dr. Heidi R. Lewis, Coordinator of Early Career Faculty Development Programs and Associate Professor of Feminist & Gender Studies, co-created the Mentoring Alliance Program (MAP) with Dr. Peony Fhagen, Senior Associate Dean for Equity, Inclusion, & Faculty Development and Director of the Crown Faculty Center.

Since MAP facilitates interdisciplinary and collective support for early career faculty, it is more sustainable than the previous 1:1 model that had been dormant for 4 years, yielding a 30% reduction in necessary labor by requiring just over 40 tenured faculty to support nearly 120 early career faculty for more than 30 years per current hiring trends. Further, the program is less exploitative, per the college's growing commitments to equity, in that all conveners are compensated. As a result, the program was approved by Dr. Claire Garcia, then Dean of the Faculty and Interim Provost, and inaugurated during the 2021-22 AY.

As of the 2022-23 AY, Dr. Emily Chan, Dean of the Faculty and Vice President, approved expanding the program's capacity to support for full-time visiting faculty.

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## Mission Statement

MAP is committed to strengthening Colorado College's retention and antiracism efforts by facilitating interdisciplinary and collective support for early career faculty who have much to offer regarding new ideas, energy, and experiences. MAP also supports tenured faculty in developing their capacity for robust, intentional, and interdisciplinary mentoring for early career faculty in collaboration with all relevant on-campus constituencies.

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## Vision Statement

MAP aims to support a college-wide cultural shift regarding early career faculty development from a disempowering, paternalistic approach to one that honors and recognizes the skills and talents of early career faculty. MAP also aims to situate Colorado College as a premier site for early career faculty development that is as attentive to antiracism and interdisciplinarity as it is undergraduate teaching excellence, quality scholarship, and impactful service.

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## Schedule

Please note all meetings should be conducted with the entire early career faculty cohort. Additionally, while the prompts below are a guide rather than a script, they have been carefully designed to ensure early career faculty are receiving focused, intentional professional development support. Along those lines, we also recommend conveners send clear agendas in advance of all meetings.

### The First Year

Conveners will host a one-hour planning and goal-setting meeting during Block 1, a one-hour debriefing meeting during Block 8, and six two-hour meetings from Block 2 through Block 7 on the following topics:

Block 1 Planning and Goal Setting	1h
Block 2 Antiracism at Colorado College	2h
Block 3 Colorado College Culture	2h
Block 4 College and Faculty Governance	2h
Block 5 Teaching and Academic Advising	2h
Block 6 Research and Scholarship	2h
Block 7 Topic of Choice (see “Grab Bag”)	2h
Block 8 Debriefing	1h

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### Subsequent Years

Conveners will host a one-hour planning and goal-setting meeting during Block 1, a one-hour debriefing meeting during Block 8, and four two-hour meetings between Block 2 and Block 7 covering topics determined by the convener and their cohort.

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## Topics

### Planning and Goal-Setting

Focus on planning and goal-setting for the year.

- What excites and|or worries you about the **year ahead**?
- Which topics are you most interested in discussing this year?
- What are your **expectations** of MAP and the relationship between you, your ECF cohort, and your convener?

### Preparing to Discuss Planning and Goal-Setting

Review the [MAP website](#).

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### Antiracism at Colorado College

According to the college, “Our antiracism commitment is a collegewide effort to actively examine and oppose the ways that racism exists and persists at CC. With antiracism central to our mission, our faculty, staff, and students will experience greater equity and inclusion, our teaching will be more impactful, and our students will be better prepared to make positive change in the world.”

- The November 2019 “**Antiracism Implementation Plan**” notes, “Racism has been present at CC since its formation, and continues today, in the actions of individuals and groups, in the outcomes of policies, and in the experiences of our physical environment.” Discuss the myriad ways this is experienced by various members of the campus community.
- Discuss your definition of **antiracism** and its relationship to what you understand to be the college’s definition.
- If you are interested in supporting the college’s **antiracism commitment**, discuss how you imagine doing so. If you are reluctant to support the commitment, discuss your questions and|or concerns.

### Preparing to Discuss Antiracism at Colorado College

Review the college’s “[Antiracism Commitment](#).”

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## Colorado College Culture

According to scholar and activist Stuart Hall, culture is “experience lived, experience interpreted, experience defined.”

- How might you describe **Colorado College culture**? What about this excites you? Worries you?
- How does the **Block Plan and liberal arts teaching and learning** impact various aspects of the college’s culture? What about that excites you? Worries you?
- What are your thoughts about the relationship between the college’s **mission, vision, and core values** and its culture?

### Preparing to Discuss Colorado College Culture

Review the college’s [“Mission and Vision”](#) and [“Core Values.”](#)

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## College and Faculty Governance

During this, discuss the college’s organizational structure with a particular (but not singular) focus on faculty governance.

- How does college and/or faculty **governance** at Colorado College differ from other institutions where you have been educated and/or employed? What excites you about those differences? Worries you?
- Which aspects of **faculty governance** do you find empowering? Disempowering?
- What questions and/or concerns do you have about the relationship between faculty governance and the **third-year review** and **tenure** promotion processes?

### Preparing to Discuss College and Faculty Governance

Review the college’s [organizational chart](#), [“Shared Governance at CC,”](#) and the [“College Administrative Organization”](#) and [“Faculty Organization”](#) sections of the Faculty Handbook.

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## Teaching

According to Faculty Handbook, “Effective teaching is an art, a science, and a craft. The skills necessary for good teaching continue to develop over years of practice. They include the ability to convey essential information in a lively way; engage students in productive discussion; improve students’ abilities to read, write, speak, and think; provide opportunities for students to conduct independent research; introduce novel fields of investigation; and develop new methods of pedagogy. The exercise of these skills results in a wide range of teaching styles, but

the results can be demonstrated in quality of course preparation and evidence of student learning.”

- What’s your **teaching philosophy**? How does it manifest in your courses?
- What’s your favorite project you assign? How did you develop that idea?
- In reflecting on your **course evaluations**, what are your thoughts about what is working? What are your thoughts about and plans for addressing what isn’t working?
- What are some successful strategies you’ve employed to adjust to teaching at a **liberal arts** institution and|or on the **Block Plan**? Which strategies didn’t necessarily work and what are your plans for addressing that?
- What questions do you have about sample teaching statements you’ve reviewed? What are your plans for characterizing your pedagogy in your **teaching statement** for third-year or tenure review?

### Preparing to Discuss Teaching

Review the “[The Faculty’s Role and Responsibilities](#)” and “[The Academic Program](#)” sections of the Faculty Handbook. At least one semester prior to an early career faculty member’s third-year or tenure review, the convener might consider sharing and discussing their third-year review and|or tenure teaching statements.

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### Academic Advising

According to the Faculty Handbook, “One of the important responsibilities of all regular, full-time faculty members, after their first year at the College, is advising students on all matters related to their progress toward graduation.”

- How do you **structure** advising sessions? What has been working? What hasn’t been working and what are your plans to address that?
- In what ways are you prepared to **assess** the quality of your advising?
- How do you understand the relationships between faculty advisors, students, and the Student Opportunities and Advising Hub staff?
- What are your plans for characterizing your advising in your third-year or tenure review **statements**?

### Preparing to Discuss Academic Advising

Review the “[The Faculty’s Role and Responsibilities](#)” and “[The Academic Program](#)” sections of the Faculty Handbook, the [Student Opportunities and Advising Hub](#) website, and the “[Catalog of Courses](#)” website.

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## Research and Scholarship

The Faculty Handbook notes, “Informed teaching requires sustained attention to current research in relevant disciplines and areas of inquiry, as demonstrated in scholarly publication, performance, and conference presentations. Each faculty member is expected to engage actively in research and to present the results regularly in professional venues.”

- What are the primary **theoretical frameworks and methods or methodologies** guiding your research? What inspired you to choose these? What inspired you to pursue your current research trajectory? Are you still excited about it?
- How do you **write and revise**? Do you plan writing times? Do you take breaks at particular intervals? Are you particular about your writing environment? Do you prefer to write alone or with others?
- How would you characterize **feedback** you’ve received from reviewers of your work? How have you responded to that feedback? What kinds of feedback typically gives you anxiety or causes you to “shut down?”
- What are the relationships between your definition of productive or successful **scholarship** and your department or program’s and the college’s?
- What questions do you have about the sample research statement you reviewed? What are your plans for characterizing your scholarship in your third-year or tenure review **research statement**?

### Preparing to Discuss Research and Scholarship

Review the “[The Faculty’s Role and Responsibilities](#)” section of the Faculty Handbook and the early career faculty member’s department or program statement on scholarship. Also consider sharing projects being drafted by the convener and members of the cohort and feedback on developing projects. At least one semester prior to an early career faculty member’s third-year or tenure review, the convener might consider sharing and discussing their third-year review and|or tenure research statements.

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## Service

The Faculty Handbook notes, “Faculty members serve the College community in many ways. They may serve on committees; assist with departmental activities; advise student organizations; participate in interdisciplinary programs; engage in artistic performances or academic presentations on campus; and represent the College in the wider community, in academic professional societies, and on committees of the ACM. Faculty members are expected to attend the Fall Conference that marks the formal opening of the academic year and to participate in specified activities of New Student Orientation. They are also expected to be



present at those occasions that call for academic processions: Fall Convocation, Honors Convocation, Baccalaureate, and Commencement.”

- What kinds of **skills** do you have that you think would be amenable to college service? What kinds of skills would you like to develop?
- What have you found rewarding about your official **service assignment**? Challenging?
- If you had to rank three **committees** today for the Faculty Executive Committee to consider when determining your assignment for next year, what would you rank first, second, and third? Why?
- What kinds of relevant **off-campus service** do you find rewarding? Challenging?
- What questions do you have about the sample **service statement** you reviewed? What are your plans for characterizing your service in your third-year or tenure review statement?

### Preparing to Discuss Service

Review the “[The Faculty’s Role and Responsibilities](#)” section of the Faculty Handbook and the list of [campus committees](#). In the semester prior to an early career faculty member’s third-year or tenure review, the convener might consider sharing and discussing their third-year review and/or tenure service statements.

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### Third-Year Review Preparation

The Faculty Handbook notes, “The purpose of [the third-year] review is diagnostic: to identify strengths and weaknesses and to provide a map toward the strongest possible tenure and promotion file.”

- How do you plan to characterize your teaching, scholarship, and service in your third-year review **statements**? Which strengths do you plan to emphasize? What areas for improvement do you plan to identify and how will you characterize your plans to improve in those areas?
- What questions and/or concerns do you have about the sample **statements** you reviewed?
- What are your professional plans for **sabbatical**?

### Preparing to Discuss Third-Year Review Preparation

Review the “[Third-Year Review](#)” and “[Promotion Reviews for Tenure-Track Faculty](#)” sections of the Faculty Handbook. The convener might also consider sharing and discussing their third-year review statements.

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### Third-Year Review Reflection

- During **sabbatical**, how did you address feedback you received during third-year review?
- How will you continue addressing this **feedback**?
- What thoughts do you have about how your department or program, MAP convener, and|or administration can **support** you?

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### Tenure Review Preparation

The Faculty Handbook notes, “The award of tenure attests to the College’s judgment that a faculty member has demonstrated a level of ability and achievement as both teacher and scholar that is consistent with the professional standards of the nation’s premier liberal arts colleges. The award of tenure expresses as well the College’s confidence that the faculty member will contribute significantly to the intellectual and collegial life of the College over an extended professional career.”

- How do you plan to characterize your teaching, research and scholarship, and service in your tenure review **statements**? Which strengths do you plan to emphasize? What areas for improvement do you plan to identify and how will you characterize your plans to improve in those areas?
- What questions and|or concerns do you have about the sample **statements** you reviewed?
- What are your professional plans for **sabbatical**?

### Preparing to Discuss Tenure Review Preparation

Review the “[The Tenure Decision](#)” and “[Promotion Reviews for Tenure-Track Faculty](#)” sections of the Faculty Handbook. The convener might also consider sharing and discussing their tenure review statements.

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### Professional Conflict

The college’s “Code of Ethical Conduct and Conflict of Interest” notes, “All members of the Colorado College community share a commitment to serve as stewards of the traditions and resources of Colorado College (“CC”). Therefore, consistent with our moral and legal obligations, CC requires all individuals associated with CC to act in good faith, with ordinary care, and in the best interests of the college.”

- Discuss your **definitions** of “good faith,” “ordinary care,” and “best interests of the college” and their relationships to what you understand to be the college’s definitions.

- Discuss your ideas about how you have or might address **conflict** with colleagues and/or students.
- Many early career faculty are sometimes hesitant to address professional conflict due to **fear of retaliation**. Discuss your thoughts about how you have or plan to negotiate this fear with a need to address conflict.

### Preparing to Discuss Professional Conflict

Review the “[Code of Ethical Conduct and Conflict of Interest](#),” the [Ombuds Office](#) website, and the [Human Resources](#) website.

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### Work-Life Coexistence

According to the “Our Commitment” page on the college website, “As an institute of higher learning, we are dedicated to the life of the mind; we prize reflection and personal accountability. We seek to sustain a workplace environment that cultivates creativity and innovation, personal and professional growth, and the health and wellbeing of all of our community members. We realize an ideal working environment identifies and magnifies people's strengths, provides opportunities for continual development of skills and abilities, and allows for the pursuit of a healthy work-life balance. We affirm that all members of our community are integral to the important work we do.”

- How have you maintained connections with your loved ones? Have you built a personal and/or professional **community** outside of the college? What have you been doing for fun?
- What **challenges** have you faced maintaining work-life coexistence on your own terms?
- In what ways have you been empowered by **the college** to pursue healthy work-life coexistence? Disempowered?

### Preparing to Discuss Work-Life Coexistence

Review the college’s “[Our Commitment](#)” page and the [Wellness Resource Center](#) website.

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## Debriefing the Year

Focus on debriefing the year and think ahead to next year.

- What were the most **rewarding** aspects of this year? Most **challenging**?
- What **professional endeavors** did you pursue this year that you plan to continue next year? Why?
- What were the most helpful aspects of **professional development and mentoring** you engaged in at the college this year? What was less helpful? Why?
- What are your **professional plans** for summer? Next year?

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