

Roles & Responsibilities

Heidi, Coordinator of Early Career Faculty Development Programs, directs the Riley Scholars-in-Residence Program, working directly with the Riley Scholars as they navigate the program. Peony, Senior Associate Dean for Equity, Inclusion, & Faculty Development, works with departments and programs interested in or currently hosting Riley Scholars.

Heidi created the mentoring guides for mentors and the RSiRP Director, organized and hosted the mock job talks, and developed the RSiRP website and FAQs.

Peony developed campus communications about the restructured RSiRP, created the new proposal for departments and programs seeking to retain Riley scholars, revised the proposal for departments and programs seeking new Riley scholars, attended the first 15 minutes of Riley scholar cohort meetings with the RSiRP Director, and attended the mock job talks.

Both Heidi and Peony co-created the mentoring schedule; co-developed and facilitated mentor development sessions, mentor check-in sessions, and RSiRP information sessions; and co-created the qualitative survey for program assessment.

Mission & Vision

We created a new RSiRP mission and vision to determine and communicate what the program is and what we plan for it to become:

Mission: The Riley Scholars-in-Residence Program provides Riley Scholars with opportunities to complete their dissertation or cultivate their postdoctoral research and enter the academic job market, while gaining meaningful experience teaching undergraduates in a liberal arts educational setting. The program also provides participating departments and programs with opportunities to enhance mentoring skills, diversify their faculty, enhance course offerings, and improve departmental or programmatic climate.

Vision: The Riley Scholars-in-Residence Program aims to recruit and retain faculty with marginalized social identities in the professoriate, especially at liberal arts colleges and universities in the U.S. The program also aims to situate Colorado College as a premier site for faculty development, especially concerning undergraduate teaching excellence and quality scholarship.

Mentoring

Then, we created a more intentional, robust, and collaborative mentoring program by creating a schedule and guides for the RSiRP program director and departments and programs accompanied by mentor development.

Schedule: The RSiRP program director hosted 1:1 meetings for 45 minutes with all scholars twice each semester (blocks 1, 4, 5, and 7) and collectively once each semester (blocks 2 and

6). The Senior Associate Dean for Equity, Inclusion, & Faculty Development attended the collective meetings for the first 15 minutes. Additionally, the RSiRP program director organized and hosted mock job talks featuring all scholars and attended by their mentor and other invited members of the campus community during Block 3 and hosted a farewell gathering for all scholars during Block 8. Finally, the RSiRP program director collaborated with former scholars employed at the college to ensure each current scholar met with a former scholar at least once during the fall semester and another during the spring semester. Department and program mentors were expected to host 1:1 meetings for 45 minutes with the scholar in their department or program each block excepting Block 3 when they were expected to attend the mock job talk.

Guides: Mentoring guides for the RSiRP program director and for department or program mentors provide discussion topics for all mentoring sessions accompanied by suggestions for providing adequate support and questions to help facilitate discussion.

Development: During a 90-minute session in Block 2, we reviewed the revised program description, leadership, and mission and vision statements, the program website, and the Columbia University “Guide to Best Practices in Faculty Mentoring.” Additionally, we designed role play scenarios to facilitate discussion about navigating difficult topics, such as scholarly productivity and the relationship between RSiRP and tenure-track positions at the college. Subsequently, we hosted a check-in meeting in Block 4 and a reflection meeting in Block 8 to provide mentors with opportunities to share their challenges and successes and to ask pertinent questions about their capacity-building progress.

Communication

To improve internal and external communication, we created an RSiRP website, revised proposal requirements for departments and programs requesting new scholars, created new proposal guidelines for departments and programs seeking to retain existing scholars, and hosted an informational session for departments and programs interested in requesting new scholars.

Website: The website homepage features a welcome statement, the RSiRP mission and vision statements, and a leadership statement. Additionally, it features five sections: “People,” which highlights leadership, current scholars, RSiRP alumni currently employed at Colorado College, RSiRP alumni at other institutions, and testimonials from RSiRP alumni at the college; “Current Riley Scholars,” which includes a comprehensive set of FAQs addressing mentoring, teaching and advising, scholarship and the job market, service, and employment and compensation, as well as the mentoring schedule; “Departments & Programs,” which also includes a comprehensive set of FAQs addressing hiring, mentoring, teaching and advising, scholarship, service, and employment and compensation, as well as the aforementioned proposal guidelines and links to the RSiRP mentoring guide for departments and programs and the Columbia University mentoring guide; a link to the Consortium for Faculty Diversity homepage; and “News & Events.”

Proposal Requirements: Revisions to the proposal requirements for departments and programs requesting new scholars include a requirement to attend the fall semester information session, a request to review the RSiRP website, and more emphasis on how departments and programs are committed to effective mentoring and support, as well as strategies and structures used to support scholars or plans to develop said strategies and structures. The new proposal requirements for departments and programs seeking to retain scholars emphasize summarizing the experiences of the host department or program and scholar, as well as illustrating a developing a commitment to providing mentoring and support.

Program Assessment

In addition to regular, informal feedback we received during the year, we created a qualitative survey on Qualtrics and distributed it to the four RSiRP scholars and four mentors in Block 8 to facilitate official assessment. The survey for scholars asked: Q1. Describe your mentoring experiences in your host department or program; Q2. Describe your mentoring experiences with the Director of RSiRP; Q3. How has participating in RSiRP benefitted you and your career goals; Q4. How would improve the RSiRP in terms of mentoring and preparation for a career in academia; and Q5. Please note any other comments or concerns. The survey for mentors asked: Q1. Describe the mentor-mentee relationship between you and the Riley scholar, including challenges and benefits; Q2. How did the mentoring development support provided by RSiRP help you with your work as a Riley Scholar mentor; Q3. How would you improve the mentoring development provided by RSiRP; Q4. Describe the benefits of hosting a Riley Scholar to your department or program; and Q5. Please note any other comments or concerns.

Riley Scholars: The survey was completed by three of the four scholars. Most responses were positive. In response to Q1, all scholars reported positive experiences this year. As a first-year scholar noted, “I appreciated [the mentor’s] availability and commitment to assisting my professional and scholarly development. We meet regularly and [the mentor] advised me on a variety of issues.” In response to Q2, all responses were positive. As a first-year scholar noted, “She organized various professional and scholarly development events, which made the Rileys’ experience at CC more immersive. Working with her was one of the most positive highlights of my experience at CC.” In response to Q3, all responses were positive. As a second-year scholar noted, “I believe that my participation in the Riley Scholar Program gave me the space and time to advance my research, establish my teaching identity, and helped prepped me for this year’s difficult job market.” Regarding Q4, the most salient recommendations were to implement more careful mentor selection, more concentrated and comprehensive information about funding and professional opportunities, and offering two-year fellowships rather than opting between one or two. Finally, only one scholar responded to Q5, recommending more frequent check-ins regarding the antiracism initiative and pandemic adjustments beyond what was provided by RSiRP staff.

Mentors: The survey was completed by one of the four mentors. All responses were positive. In response to Q1, the mentor noted they met regularly with the scholar in their program and that they learned a lot from each other. In response to Q2, the mentor wrote, “It

provided a helpful scaffold/reminder for topics so we don't forget anything." In response to Q3, the mentor wrote, "It was nice to have the reminders, and the invitation to learn from the mentee was important. We all can keep learning and newer folks have much to share." In response to Q4, the mentor focused mostly on the benefit of the scholar cross-listing their courses with another program. The mentor thanked RSiRP staff in response to Q5.

Recommendations

The following recommendations may help facilitate RSiRP improvements:

Hiring Schedule: We might consider revising the proposal schedule, especially since we were not able to successfully hire any new scholars for the 2021-2022 academic year. Currently, we conduct the information session early in Block 4 and request proposals near the end of Block 5. Then, departments or programs try to hire scholars before the end of the academic year with a start date in the subsequent fall. However, we might consider conducting the information session in Block 1 and requesting proposals in Block 3 so departments or programs can begin the hiring process in Block 4. Alternatively, we might consider keeping the information session and proposal dates we have now but permitting departments or programs to begin the hiring process in the subsequent fall rather than hiring in that same spring. In short, the process seems a bit rushed and inattentive to the competitive job market we are currently facing.

Fellowship Terms: We might consider hiring all fellows for two years for the reasons expressed by a scholar in the "Assessment" section above. Additionally, while we must be mindful of budgetary constraints, we might consider securing a portion of the faculty salary budget to allow for at least two scholars each year so that cohorts and mentoring networks are as strong as possible.

Assessment: We might consider ways to increase survey participation and include quantitative data for more comprehensive analyses.