

## **Report of the Faculty Development and Retention Strategic Plan Subcommittee**

### **General Philosophy and Vision Statement**

Faculty development and retention at Brooklyn College should be re-conceptualized to include a wide range of areas and activities occurring on multiple levels, from the institutional through the departmental to the individual. It should involve organizational developments that render the institution more supportive of faculty. In addition, it should cover intentional changes aimed at enabling individual faculty members to further their growth as teachers, scholars, and professionals. Strategies aimed at the individual level must pay attention to the professional as well as personal needs of faculty, and must consider both the stage of faculty members' careers as well as the stage of their lives. This multi-prong, multilevel approach should be coordinated and integrated to assure that new initiatives on the same or across levels synergistically and strategically work together to further faculty development and retention. And in particular, faculty development strategies should be in alignment with the institution's strategic goals and faculty tenure and promotion criteria so that individual career development simultaneously enhances the institution and rewards faculty.

Below five broad goals are listed that reflect and pertain to different levels of the institution, moving from the macro toward the micro level:

- Goal 1. Create supportive institutional structures and policies
- Goal 2. Revitalize the Center for Teaching
- Goal 3. Develop a mentoring program
- Goal 4. Enhance the quality of life for faculty on and off campus
- Goal 5. Increase support for faculty scholarship.

All five goals are important and warrant the attention and resources of the institution. Several specific objectives have been identified for each goal.

#### **Goal 1: Create Supportive Institutional Structures and Policies**

Increasing the institution's effectiveness and efficiency would in turn result in better support for faculty. Such support would also be enhanced by creating a welcoming and accommodating climate, a climate characterized by clear and transparent institutional processes and expectations, by recognition of an array of faculty accomplishments, by flexible policies that allow for varied career-paths, and by opportunities for cross-departmental faculty gatherings. To achieve this, the following institutional changes should be considered:

- Develop a college mission statement that provides potential new faculty hires with an unambiguous set of expectations about Brooklyn College and the role and responsibilities of its faculty
- Develop guidelines for hiring faculty and for determining salaries
- Assure that all faculty appointments are at the appropriate rank and salary

- Streamline the Promotion and Tenure structure and process, making them transparent and understandable
- Revise the Promotion and Tenure criteria so that faculty are rewarded for their contributions to the college, including for teaching, for service to the college and to students, and for faculty development
- Build greater flexibility into the Promotion and Tenure criteria by broadening the definition of scholarship to include the scholarship of integration, application, and teaching as well that of discovery
- Clarify the Promotion and Tenure criteria, and specify the types of evidence and measures to be used in assessing the criteria
- Refine the faculty evaluation process, in particular the student evaluation of faculty, peer observations and annual evaluations
- Create a faculty ombudsman position with responsibility for faculty development and for implementing and monitoring relevant strategic objectives
- Create a data base for monitoring faculty career development and progress
- Create a management development program that offers workshops, for faculty interested in administration, on managing academic departments, on conflict resolution, and budgets, etc.
- The management development program would also sponsor workshops for chairs on these subjects and on promotion and tenure issues
- Create more venues for faculty to meet and greet one another and members of the administration, e.g., monthly informal lunches, “chats with the President or Provost,” etc.

## **Goal 2: Revitalize the Center for Teaching**

The Center for Teaching should play a vital role in the life of the college, specifically in faculty development activities. It should become an indispensable resource to faculty in helping them establish their careers as teachers and scholars. To do this the following objectives should be considered:

- Revise the governance plan of the Center for Teaching (CfT) to assure that it reflects best practices for such centers
- Broaden the mission of the CfT to include the wider array of activities that fall under faculty development
- Rename the CfT to reflect its broader mission, e.g., “The Center for Teaching, Learning and Faculty Development”
- Hire a full time director for the CfT with expertise in faculty development
- The CfT should support and conduct relevant research including:
  - a. focus groups with faculty and students to determine what kinds of faculty development is needed
  - b. projects to identify the reasons why potential new hires reject our job offers or resign after coming to the college
  - c. outcomes assessment regarding teaching effectiveness
- The CfT should provide consultation on teaching, including course and curriculum development, in-class presentation skills, skills in advising and

- tutoring, skills in interacting with students, information and training on student learning and outcomes assessment.
- It should initiate and support a conversation at the college regarding best practices in retention, faculty development, and pedagogy. Topics to be discussed might include interdisciplinary initiatives and co-teaching initiatives, work sample methodology and rubrics, differentiated learning strategies for students with English language needs and special needs.
  - It should make use of a number of venues for supporting such a conversation including one-semester seminars, informal study groups, two-hour workshops, all day conferences. Both Brooklyn College faculty and external experts should be invited to lead these venues.
  - It should provide opportunities for Brooklyn College faculty who have developed innovative pedagogic strategies to model those strategies for other faculty at the college.
  - Junior faculty who might be familiar with some of the most current pedagogic practices should be provided with the opportunity to model those practices.
  - More generally, the CfT should sponsor “turn-key” workshops, where faculty have opportunities to teach to others some new pedagogic practice they have recently learned`.
  - To further faculty’s skills as scholars and professionals, the CfT should sponsor workshops and support groups on grant writing and publishing.
  - Offer workshops on the Promotion and Tenure process for untenured faculty at particular points during their probationary years when information about the process would be especially useful and calming
  - Offer mock Promotion and Tenure reviews for faculty
  - Recognize and reward faculty participation in the CfT through either monetary compensation, reassigned time or credit towards Promotion and Tenure
  - Become a clearinghouse of data on retention, faculty development and mentoring
  - Offer an array of on-line documents including model syllabi, teaching portfolios, learning objectives and course outcomes assessment plans
  - The calendar of CfT events should be scheduled with enough lead time so that faculty would be able to attend.
  - The CfT should actively reach out to faculty to inform them of the Center’s mission, resources and calendar of activities.

### **Goal 3: Develop a Mentoring Program**

The college should establish a comprehensive and effective mentoring program. The mentoring program should provide opportunities for faculty to support, learn from, and give guidance to one another. It should also be a stimulus for developing a culture of mentoring at the college that shapes the relationships among faculty members and in turn the relationships between teachers and students. Possible objectives include:

- Establish a college-wide task force to review the literature on best practices for mentoring programs, and recommend several models appropriate for the college
- The mentoring program should be highly visible, publicized, and although available to all faculty, should first aim at the needs of untenured and tenured junior faculty.

- Most importantly, the mentoring program for junior faculty should focus on career socialization, helping them to understand and acquire the values, norms and behaviors that would enable them to play various social roles expected in the institution. In particular, mentors should help junior faculty learn about available college resources, learn how to navigate through the institution's bureaucracy, develop strategies for teaching our student body, for classroom management, and for balancing research, teaching, service, life, and external academic engagement. Mentors should offer information and guidance: on handling difficult discussion topics in class, particularly those concerning race, ethnicity and politics, on how to motivate all students in class, on working with English language challenged students and special needs students. Mentors should function as a bridge to the rest of the college community and provide opportunities to network with others.
- The mentoring program should also provide opportunities for bidirectional socialization, whereby the values and beliefs of junior faculty influence, as well as are influenced by, the institution's culture. Junior faculty represent a rich source of new ideas. Paying attention to those ideas would enrich the institution and at the same time communicate the message to new faculty that they are valued members of the community.
- An incentive or reward system should be established for mentors including recognition for exceptional effectiveness in the role.
- The mentoring program should offer new formal strategies and opportunities for guiding faculty. New models of mentoring, such as the circle of advisors approach, which acknowledge that mentoring relationships can occur among peers and that different mentors might be required for different kinds of help, should be explored.
- The mentoring program should also identify and capitalizes on what we more informally already do. It should recognize the importance of informal mentoring relationships and identify their elements in order to find ways to encourage and support those relationships.
- Retirees should be contacted to determine if they would be interested in playing a role in mentoring.
- Provide office space and access to other college resources for retirees who mentor faculty
- A formative and summative evaluation plan should be developed to assess the effectiveness of the mentoring program and to identify ways of improving the program.

#### **Goal 4: Enhance the Quality of Life for Faculty On and Off Campus**

Faculty development should also pay attention to faculty members as human beings and provide services to enhance their health, well being and quality of life. Further, it should structure opportunities that allow for greater harmony between faculty members' personal lives and academic careers. Suggested objectives for accomplishing this include:

- Establish a Work-Life Center which provides information on childcare, elder care, flexible work options, etc., and takes responsibility for investigating best practices nation-wide for enriching the quality of faculty life

- The Work-Life Center should investigate and identify faculty needs at each stage of their careers and lives, e.g., pre-tenure, immediately post-tenure, mid-career, as senior professors, immediately pre-retirement and then during retirement, and develop appropriate services and resources to address those needs.
- Establish a Transitional Support Program which allows faculty members to remain productive at work while attending to their personal needs. A Transitional Support Program would provide a variety of low-cost support options to faculty in the midst of major life transitions, such as the birth or adoption of a child, personal medical needs, family illness and/or caring for an elderly parent.
- Make use of partial leaves to establish a Gradual Retirement Program that offers faculty the opportunity of phasing-in retirement, i.e., of remaining active at the college over an extended period of time but with a decreased work load
- The Work-Life Center should offer faculty wellness management programs, workshops on interpersonal skills, stress and time management.
- Establish an infant/early childhood center that offers on-campus childcare services and educational opportunities for the children of faculty and staff
- Develop strategies for raising salary levels for junior and incoming faculty, including hiring fewer new faculty at higher salaries
- Offer a one-semester parental leave at full-pay at the birth or adoption of a child
- Partner with a local financial institution to establish a Home Loan program. The program would offer reduced fees on mortgages and home buying services, down payment assistance and discounted interest rates.
- Explore offering housing supplements and perhaps in the long-term faculty housing
- Provide job assistance services to the partners of new employees who also seek faculty or professional positions in the area. Such services might include an extensive website with links to all New York City-area college employment websites as well as a link to CUNY's job website.
- Develop a faculty relocation program which provides funds for moving expenses and helps in the location of housing
- Human Resource Services should annually schedule information meetings to update faculty on their benefits packages
- Establish inviting “Faculty Gathering” places on campus that facilitate more informal contact among faculty members
- Improve classroom facilities
- Routinely monitor faculty morale to identify issues of concern and to develop appropriate interventions
- Articulate the values of collegiality, equity, inclusiveness and flexibility, assuring all faculty that their concerns will be seriously considered and addressed

#### **Goal 5: Increase Support for Faculty Scholarship**

The college should increase its resource allocation to support faculty scholarship.

Possible objectives include:

- Provide reassigned time to faculty for developing and submitting grant proposals

- Provide emergency funding that would enable graduate students to continue working on faculty research projects between grants. Losing students who are integral to projects during the grant writing and renewal process may reduce chances for continued funding.
- Additional monies should be provided to subsidize attendance at professional meetings and conferences or alternatively the college should explore establishing a loan system so faculty could attend important national conferences without going into credit card debt
- Increase the Tow Travel Fellowship opportunities and create a publication that reviews and describes faculty's experience and projects supported by the Tow funds
- Better publicize and disseminate resources currently available, such as the Faculty Development Center in the Library that assists faculty in creating posters for conference presentations
- Provide information on affiliations with the Graduate Center, especially for faculty in departments without Ph.D. programs.

George Cunningham  
Geri DeLuca  
Kathleen McSorely  
Jerry Mirotznik (Chair)  
Martha Nadell  
Sally Robles  
Liz Weis  
Vanessa Yingling