

MENTORING ALLIANCE PROGRAM

MENTORING SESSIONS TOPIC GRAB BAG

FOR CONVENERS AND FULL-TIME VISITING 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

Conveners will host a one-hour planning and goal-setting meeting in Block 1, a one-hour meeting to debrief the year in Block 8, and four two-hour meetings (two during the fall and two during the spring) during blocks chosen by the convener and their cohort on the following topics.

Block 1	Planning and Goal Setting	1h
Block TBD (Fall)	Colorado College Culture & Antiracism	2h
Block TBD (Fall)	Teaching on the Block Plan	2h
Block TBD (Spring)	Research and Scholarship	2h
Block TBD (Spring)	Topic of Choice (see “Grab Bag”)	2h
Block 8	Debriefing	1h

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.

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The Grab Bag

Planning and Goal-Setting

- 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 relationships between you, your ECF cohort, and your convener?

Preparing to Discuss Planning and Goal-Setting

Review the [MAP website](#).

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Colorado College Culture and Antiracism

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.”

- 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?
- Discuss your definition of **antiracism** and its relationship to what you understand to be the college’s definition.

Preparing to Discuss Colorado College Culture and Antiracism

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

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College and Faculty Governance

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 **full-time visiting faculty review** processes?

Preparing to Discuss College and Faculty Governance

Review the college's [organizational chart](#), "[Shared Governance at CC](#)," the "[College Administrative Organization](#)" and "[Faculty Organization](#)" sections of the Faculty Handbook, and other accessible, relevant documents.

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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?

Preparing to Discuss Teaching

Review the "[The Faculty's Role and Responsibilities](#)" and "[The Academic Program](#)" sections of the Faculty Handbook. The convener might also consider sharing their teaching statements with members of the cohort on the job market.

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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?”

Preparing to Discuss Research and Scholarship

Consider sharing projects being drafted by the convener and/or members of the cohort along with feedback on developing projects and research statements, if members of the cohort are on the job market.

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The Job Market

This session is designed to support members of the cohort who are on the job market even those who may desire and be pursuing opportunities at the college.

- Early career scholars understandably cast a wide net while they’re on the job market. That “said,” to what kinds of **institutions** are you most interested in applying? In what kinds of departments or programs are you most interested in working?
- In what ways are you planning to tailor your **application materials** to varying kinds of institutions? For example, how might the cover letter you submit for a job at a research institution differ from one you would submit to a liberal arts college? How might you revise your CV, teaching statement, research statement, and other application materials?
- If you secure an **interview**, what kinds of questions are you preparing to ask the department or program considering your application, students, members of the administration, and/or other community members to whom you might be introduced? What kinds of questions do you anticipate them asking you?

Preparing to Discuss The Job Market

Consider sharing cover letters, CVs, teaching statements, research statements, and/or other relevant documents.

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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, especially those who are contingent, 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 thinking 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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