

Mutual Mentoring Groups

Description

CATL is sponsoring Mutual Mentoring Groups as an extension of Elon's new faculty orientation. During the 2012-13 academic year, this voluntary program is open to all full-time faculty who have completed one year at Elon and have not yet been reviewed for tenure/continuance. This program is adapted from practices at the University of Seattle and from the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Mutual Mentoring Group members will meet (typically 1-2 times per month, at the group's discretion) and work together to assist participants with an issue or project they are working on INDIVIDUALLY. In a meeting:

- The time available is shared out equally or as agreed between members;
- Each takes a turn to present/explain their task/problem to the group;
- Group members devote their energies to assisting the person in exploring options, and they are supportive but challenging where appropriate;
- Every participant concludes each group meeting with an action plan.

Guidelines

Group members will agree on guidelines for their group. Often these include:

- Distribute time equally;
- Keep the focus on the individual;
- Listen to, support, and challenge other group members;
- Maintain a positive, cooperative atmosphere, and treat group conversation as confidential;
- Ensure clear action planning, i.e. "By the next time we meet, I will...."

Roles

- CHAIR: Keeps time. Gives a one-minute warning before a person's time expires.
- NOTE TAKER: Keeps a brief summary of each person's goals, circulates these (and details of the next meeting date/time/place) by email, and brings notes to the next meeting.
- REPORTER: Monitors how well the group stuck to the guidelines. Speaks up if the group is off-track. Asks at the end, "Did we follow all the guidelines? Which do we need to attend to?"

Values underpinning Mutual Mentoring Groups

- The voluntary nature of group membership;
- Faculty benefit from being part of a network of peer mentors;
- Reflection is a key to learning from experience;
- Trust and confidentiality are essential for effective mentoring partnerships;
- Growth and development require both support and challenge;
- Goal setting and accountability contribute to positive change;
- Effective mutual mentoring is holistic and evolves with the needs of the individual.

ADAPTED FROM: McGill, I., & Beaty, L. (2001). *Action learning: A guide for professional, management and educational development*. (2nd ed.) London: Kogan Page; and, Yun, J.H., & Sorcinelli, M. (2008). "When mentoring is the medium: Lessons learned from mutual mentoring as a faculty development initiative," *To improve the academy*, 365-384.

Questions? Contact Mary Jo Festle, festle@elon.edu / 278-6423, or Peter Felten, pfelten@elon.edu / 278-6609.

Initial meeting

- Where are you now and where do you want to be? (You might want to focus on scholarship, teaching, career, work-life balance, or something else; your focus may change over time.)
- What's getting in the way? OR What's been challenging for you?
- What do you hope this group will provide? (Accountability, support, etc.) What do you need from others outside of the group? (Someone to give you feedback on your P&T file, a research or teaching mentor...)
- End with: "By the next time we meet, I will..." Set a specific goal.

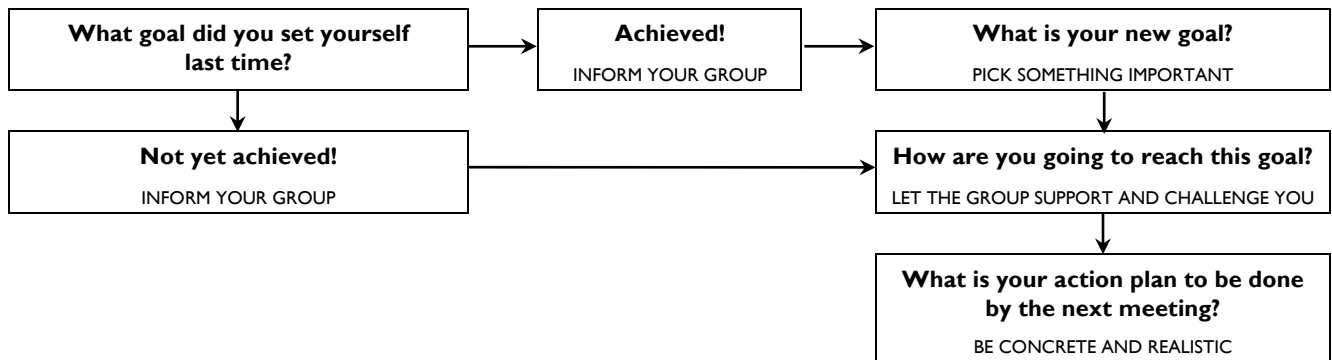
Between meetings

- Work on your own goal.
- If seeking feedback on written work: Tell group in advance what kind of feedback you most need.
- Review the notes from the previous meeting to prepare for next time.

During meetings

- Agree on who will serve in each role and how much time you'll spend per person (15 minutes/person?).
- Give constructive feedback to each other, offering challenge and/or support as appropriate.
- Stick to the agreed time limit, and help the individual identify people outside the group who could help.
- Conclude each person's time with a clear goal: "By the next time we meet, I will..."
- Near the end of the meeting, reflect as a group on how the process is working. Agree upon changes in the process, as necessary.

Process



How to join a Mutual Mentoring Group

- CATL is sponsoring Mutual Mentoring Groups as an extension of Elon's new faculty orientation.
- Participation is open to all full-time faculty who have completed one year on the faculty and have not yet been reviewed for tenure/continuance.
- To express interest in joining a group, fill-out the online form <http://tinyurl.com/elonmentor> by Oct 1.
- Groups typically will be made up of 4 faculty from different departments. CATL will create multidisciplinary groups based on participant interest. If you would like to be in a group with specific people or focused a particular topic (or if you would like not to be in a group with someone), indicate that on the form.
- CATL will convene the first group meeting, and after that individual groups will meet on their own.
- Each group will have access to \$500 for the academic year to cover reasonable expenses (e.g., meals).
- Membership is voluntary. CATL will keep track of who participates for program evaluation purposes only.