Material taken from symposium held at NSF 25 June 2015

New Faculty: Issues and Challenges to Success

Mary Deane Sorcinelli

Mount Holyoke College

Guiding Questions

- How is the professoriate changing?

- What do new faculty need and want?

- What might we do to ensure a better future?

How is Professoriate/Faculty Life Changing?

- Expectations to keep up with expanding knowledge and changing technology
- Expectations to use evidence-based practices to support diverse learners
- Pressures for heightened productivity/entrepreneurialism
- Need to work collaboratively
- Escalating pace and expanding workload
- Sense of declining faculty power and autonomy
- Challenge of finding/maintaining academic community
- Challenge of defining boundaries between personal and professional lives
- Need for continuous professional development

Career Challenges for New Faculty

- Expectations and evaluation

- Faculty work—research and teaching

- Collegiality and community

- Work-life balance & integration

Top Ten Roadblocks for an Early Career Investigator

10) Getting a grant

9) Getting a grant

8) Getting a grant

7) Getting a grant

6) Getting a grant

5) Getting a grant

4) Getting a grant

3) Getting a grant

2) Getting a grant

1) Getting a grant

Expectations & Evaluation Landscape

- Ever rising demands for research productivity, grant funding (Siegel et al., 2003)

- Rise of interdisciplinary and inter-institutional university research centers/collaborations (Boardman & Bozeman, 2007)

- In sciences, tenure favors single discipline, basic research, federal research grants; little weight for applied research, patents, industry partnerships (Siegel et al, 2003).

- Pressure on university finances re: research support (Trower, 2012)

Evaluation: New Faculty are Asking For:

- Clarity of expectations—NF relatively clear about the tenure process (what they need to submit, when, to whom)

- Need much more clarity about tenure standards (the performance threshold—how good is good enough)

- Articulation of priorities/weights, provision of written information, mentoring and guidance

- Performance feedback—explicit, focused, affirming as well as corrective (e.g. annual & mid-point review)

R & Teaching: New Faculty are Asking For

Research

- Research leaves, course release, start-up packages, travel support, research assistants, pre-and–post award support

Teaching

- Skills in course design, learner-centered teaching, course-based assessment, blended and online learning, use of new learning spaces, and valuation of teaching

Faculty Professional Development

- Support for scholarly writing/grant writing, career advancement, faculty mentoring and leadership

Venues

- Shift from one-on-one to peer, "mutual mentoring" through research circles, faculty learning communities, intensive institutes